

2804 Broadview  
Terrace

Annapolis, MD 21401

2/04/20

RE: Bill HB283 Adding mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine as Schedule I

From: Eric Rice: Opposed to Bill

Please understand these substances are simply two alkaloids in a plant called Kratom that 10-15 million Americans take daily.

As you read on please realize taking this plant away is taking something away from yourself that you, a family member or close friend might one day need. Trust me when I tell you if chronic pain comes to you or those you are close with you want options for yourself and those you are close to other than pills.

My name is Eric Rice, 27 year Annapolis resident, lifetime Marylander, retired after selling a technology company, father, coach, not a single criminal record or even a speeding ticket, daily powerlifter at 5am every day, making over 928 workouts (6 days a week) without a missed workout and involved in my community. I have never gotten behind the wheel drunk and I do not use illegal drugs.

.... Sufferer of Incurable Degenerative Disk Disease in my thoracic spine and **Kratom User. Kratom saved me and gave me my life back, while giving me no high like my Oxycodone pain pills.** I have used Kratom for 3.5 years and studied Kratom that entire time. Not once have I ever been negatively affected by Kratom in any noticeable way. You do not get any entertaining high, dissociation, hallucinogenic, psychotic or other proclaimed mythical symptoms while taking Kratom. Kratom simply does not change your persona except to provide pain relief and a very slight mood lift and very slight clean energy such as a couple of espressos might give you. It might be considered a 5-hour energy drink that actually works while having some effect on pain.

I am a cynic and skeptic. I have never fallen for an MLM, diet pill or other fad, I do not day trade stocks or entertain my friends new ridiculous get rich quick scheme. Four years ago, I ran across a forum of Kratom users. As most things I run across like this I expected to tear Kratoms apart as the latest scam after about an hour of research. I never was never able to do that. I spent the next 6 months fully immersed in Kratom education while continuing to take my Oxycodone.

I have read as many as 10,000 personal accounts of Kratom users and spoken personal to as many as 500. The more I read the more I am amazed that in 2020 a plant with such positive attributes was unknown to us in the United States only 10 or so years ago.

After about 6 months of research and a quite compelling amount of data I tried my first Kratom dose, during an acute back pain episode. Acute for me means going to my bed. I was quite underwhelmed by any noticeable high, but I felt but quite overwhelmed with the fact that I had about a 60% reduction in pain. Just enough to get back to my life that day.

Want information on Kratom? I have immersed myself in knowledge about this substance. I can provide you facts, nuance from thousands of user experiences, general science and safety concerns.

This bill is a good thing. We can now teach you about this plant, how it might help Marylanders, why it is widely different than prescription opiates and heroin and how it helps with pain and opiate addiction without:

# Respiratory depression

That is right. No death by shallow breathing the main cause of death of heroin and pain pills.

Facts:

- Kratom is 100% a plant that works because of several main alkaloids (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine) and several lesser ones.
- You are going to hear from Kratom users who are regular people and who are the lifeblood of our state, who work every day, coach soccer, have many kids and grandkids, suffer from Lupus, car accidents, back pain or who were stuck in a cycle of opiate addiction but no longer are. It is estimated that we now have 10-15 million Kratom user in the USA.
- Most of the Kratom user community were desperate to cut chronic pain and reduce the number of damaging pills they were using the do so. Others were just as desperate to quite heroin or alcohol.
- Kratom users do not become divorced, lose their kids, get fired and become homeless. In fact, the opposite happens as lives are improved.
- Kratom does not make you high, or psychotic or out of it in any way. It is often so subtle that first time users will say they felt absolutely nothing. The most common descriptions are slight mood lift, slight reduction of fatigue (lupus and fabrymalgia suffers say it is a godsend in this regards), general reduction in many types of chronic pain, increase in work effort, slight focus increases. These are all subtle. You do not lose your faculty, reasoning or intelligence.

My money where my mouth is: I like to say this so people understand why Kratom users know that the effects are not something to fear (we should know since we take it). If I was going into major surgery and my surgeon said to me before the surgery "I am a Kratom user. I would like you to know I will be taking my morning Kratom before your surgery... I WOULD HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PROBLEM WITH THAT DOCTOR OPERATING ON ME because I know as a user that it changes nothing in terms of capabilities.

- Kratom has extremely low abuse potential for a very simple reason...it has the self-limiting "asset" (asset in this case) that higher doses cause an unharmed but very uncomfortable nausea and sickness.

And It just is not strong. People simply do not go from Kratom to pills and heroin.

- You can't overdose on Kratom, well you could but... Could you overdose on coffee? Yea but you can't really consume the amount of coffee needed to overdose. The amount of



Kratom you would need to take to overdose is something along the lines of 2lbs of Kratom. The dose for Kratom is around ½ to 1 teaspoon. IT IS LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO TAKE MORE THAN A FEW TABLESPOONS BEFORE GETTING Nauseous. On your way to overdosing you are going to get extremely nauseous likely at around 2-4 tablespoons and be unable to consume anymore. (The same happens when people try to use it recreationally.

- For the reasons above it is not recreational any more than an espresso or a 5-hour energy would be before going out.
- In all my tens of thousands of encounters with Kratom users I have never heard of a single person going from Kratom towards more hard-core opiates like pills or heroin.
- Heroin and Opiate Pill Use Reductions: The opposite is very common though. Some % of people stuck in the cycle of opiate / heroin addiction can switch to Kratom and quickly lead a completely normal life. Some of these stories are astounding. I have met these people, talked to them and questioned them. In some lucky souls Kratom seems to ward off heroin withdrawal (the reason most who want to quite can't even go 24 hours without a fix) and then to curb cravings.
- Any deaths that were attributed to Kratom were poly drug users and had a concoction of illegal and legal drugs in their system. Kratom was never the actual cause of death. In some countries it has been used for centuries as common as coffee and deaths do not occur. Given that we have 10-15 million Kratom users in the United States without any single use Kratom deaths we can put to bed the idea that Kratom is causing an epidemic of deaths.

I have a lot more data on this plant, from both personal experiences and users. I also have a lot of thoughts on the opioid epidemic and current rehab protocols and why they fail in large part. However, I am out of time and need to leave to speak to you fine people in person.

I can be reached at [ericrice11@me.com](mailto:ericrice11@me.com)

Regards,

Eric Rice