

Ice Hollow Farms respectfully offers this testimony in opposition to HB 249. We truly appreciate the work of Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, and the Environment and Transportation Committee for the ongoing support of a strong Maryland hemp industry.

*About Ice Hollow Farms*

Ice Hollow Farms is a license holder under the Maryland Industrial Hemp Program based in Hancock, Maryland (Washington County). Ice Hollow Farms is working to re-establish agriculture in orchard land that was left fallow. We are investigating soil remediation for this land that was treated with 1940s-1960s era pesticides and irrigation through lead pipes. Ice Hollow Farms is approximately 2 miles from Hancock corporate limits as well as from Harvest Health and Recreation, a medical cannabis grower and processor.

Ice Hollow Farms has been challenged, like other growers, by the lack of processing facilities. The market will not develop in Maryland without these specialized agricultural facilities. Whereas CBD production from processed flower is the product of choice at the time, expansion into the food, fiber, building materials and other markets will not occur without advocacy by agricultural agencies.

*Opposition to HB 249*

The growth of hemp represents an exciting new industry to add to the products within Maryland's agriculture portfolio. We urge the Committee to consider the need to preserve this fledgling industry prior to taking dramatic action to limit the growth of hemp in suburban and urban areas. One exciting aspect of the hemp industry is that a diverse geographic population will have access to participate. The placement of these buffer zones as the bill prescribes would constrain this industry at this stage. The ongoing question of buffer zones has been contemplated, specifically in relation to the growth of medical marijuana. We would urge this Committee to defer to the expert work of the Department and testing authorities and resist any effort to create a restrictive buffer zone or other restrictions targeted at small growers.

Ice Hollow Farms

<https://icehollowfarms.com/>

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