

DELEGATE DARRYL BARNES
Legislative District 25
Prince George's County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

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Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2021

Testimony of Delegate Darryl Barnes

RE: In Support of HB 453

Medical Cannabis Reauthorization Act

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Members of the Committee:

HB 453 is a fundamental next step to our shared goal of having more diversity and equity in Maryland's existing medical cannabis supply chain. Essentially, the bill repeals the statutory caps on the number of grower and processor licenses that the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Cannabis Commission is authorized to issue.

Doing such, establishes new requirements for the commission's application review and evaluation process for medical cannabis grower and processor licenses including:

- Establishing new timeframes for review and required inspections
- Requiring the commission to conduct a study on the number of grower and processor licenses necessary to meet the demand for medical cannabis and report its findings to the General Assembly
- Repealing a requirement that a vendor submit an invoice within a certain amount of time in order to receive interest payments

The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC) already has the authority to let supply-and-demand market forces inform the appropriate number of dispensary "point-of-sale" licenses – HB453 will expand that authority to include medical cannabis cultivation and processing business licenses as well.

Imposing a legislative "cap" on the number cultivation and processing licenses unnecessarily undermines the MMCC mission by artificially limiting the supply of medical cannabis products to the growing number of certified medical cannabis patients in our state.

Current law prevents responsible Maryland-based small business operations from participating in this emerging legal medical industry. This does not only hurt the Maryland economy generally – it specifically harms the communities most negatively impacted by our racist criminal justice system.

Frankly stated, it is unjust to impose unnecessary barriers to market participation and economic self-sufficiency. The MMCC should be enabled to issue cultivation and processing licenses to responsible Maryland-based business owner-operators based on consumer demand for high quality, safe, and affordable medical cannabis products. It's time to get it done.

For all these reasons, **I urge a favorable report on House Bill 453.**

In Solidarity,

Darryl Barnes

Delegate Darryl Barnes
Delegate, District 25
Chairman, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland