



MARYLAND HEMP
COALITION

March 3, 2022

Senate Finance Committee
Senator Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair

Bill #	SB788
Position	OPPOSE

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Maryland Hemp Coalition. The coalition supports efforts to regulate Delta-8, but strongly opposes Senate Bill 788 due to its broader implications on the hemp industry. The proposed bill to prohibit hemp extracts curbs research into the therapeutic and industrial uses of hemp. Further, the bill, as written, makes it difficult for all hemp farmers to even produce their crop.

Ultimately, Senate Bill 788 will harm an industry that is still in its infancy. The use of hemp is greater than delta-8 and other extracts. UMD Eastern Shore has recognized this fact along with the crop's potential as a "cash crop" in the state of Maryland. UMD, Salisbury State, and other universities have created research programs to discover how hemp may be cultivated and used to benefit Marylanders. A restriction on the cultivation of hemp would strain these programs, making it difficult for universities to study hemp's potential effects and uses. Furthermore, the bill will negatively affect a growing agricultural industry with farms operating throughout in the state. As proposed, the bill makes hemp production challenging as it adds restrictions to all parts of the plant, the seeds, and the resins extracted; these restrictions are not limited to Delta-8, and will restrict all other naturally produced cannabiniol derivatives.

The bill essentially prohibits the growth, research, and development of hemp plants in Maryland.

Although the Maryland Hemp Coalition is opposed to legislation that prohibits the growth and research of parts of the hemp plant, we recognize that there is a need to reasonably regulate access to products containing Delta-8. In this respect, we believe that Delta-8 is best regulated in stores rather than on farms. We welcome the opportunity to help craft reasonable regulations.

We would like to thank the committee for hearing our concerns, and we urge you to oppose the restriction of hemp plants as proposed in Senate Bill 788.

Sincerely,


Kevin Atticks, DCD

