

Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB 837- Cannabis Reform-**OPPOSE**

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of The Committee,

While all points of opposition are valid and important to consider, the following consideration, in my opinion, stands above the rest:

Growing marijuana harms the environment. Cannabis plants require almost double the amount of water as other vegetation needed to grow. Using water for cannabis growth, reduces the water available for agriculture (food) and threatens wildlife species. On the other hand, legal indoor growing of marijuana requires a large amount of electricity for lighting, heating, and ventilation. This produces an amount of greenhouse gas emissions equal to that of three million cars each year. Ironically, **HB 0171- Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act, set for hearing on 2/15/2022 in the Economic Matters and Environmental and Transportation Committees**, proposes an **exponential reduction** of statewide greenhouse gas emissions, "so that after 2040, statewide greenhouse gas emissions are net negative..." **These are conflicting pieces of legislature!**

There are many more cons to the legalization of marijuana, many of which are self-evident. Additionally:

- Legalized marijuana creates steep costs for society and taxpayers that far outweigh its tax revenues. Societal costs of marijuana use include paying for increased emergency room visits, medical care and addiction treatment, more victims of drugged driving accidents and increased crime. Legalizing marijuana would put one more harmful substance in our society that costs more than the revenue it generates. Money raised from legal marijuana taxes generally accounts for less than 1% of the state's tax revenue.
- Legalizing marijuana increases use by teens. Teen use of marijuana will increase as an indirect result of HB 837. Although this bill targets individuals aged 21 and older, the simple act of legalizing marijuana makes it more readily available to all ages.
- Traffic accidents and deaths increase when marijuana is legalized. Marijuana-related traffic deaths rose 62% following the legalization of marijuana in Colorado. Additionally, the Highway Loss Data Institute found a 6% increased crash risk in legalized marijuana states.

For these reasons, I ask that you vote an UNFAVORABLE report for HB 837- Cannabis Reform.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Price(ACRWC)
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