



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

February 17, 2023

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Opposition of HB 556 - Cannabis Reform**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony opposing the Hemp related sections of HB 556. This omnibus cannabis reform bill does several things. It renames the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission to be the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission. It establishes a regulatory and licensing system for adult-use cannabis and imposes the sales and use tax on the sale of adult-use cannabis. The bill establishes the Cannabis Regulation and Enforcement Division in the Commission and requires the Division, on or before July 1, 2023, to convert medical cannabis licenses to licenses to operate a medical and adult-use cannabis business. Lastly and most importantly as it relates to agriculture, the bill amends the hemp industry language to further restrict the CBD side of the hemp industry to a point where one would need to have a cannabis license to participate in the CBD side of the Hemp industry. Thus killing the federally legal hemp industry to allow the federally illegal cannabis industry to monopolize the entire market.

When the 2018 federal Farm Bill was passed, it decoupled Hemp from cannabis and allowed the states to create permits to allow hemp farming in the US. Shortly after that bill passed and was signed into law by the President, USDA rolled out an interim regulations for states to use to regulate the new industry. These are the regulations Maryland Department of Ag adopted and uses today. After a year of review, USDA made some changes and rolled out their final regulations for Hemp. Unfortunately, MDA hasn't made all those changes. One specific rule change was the allowance of up to 1% delta-9- THC concentration in the plant. Current state regulations only allow up to 0.3%.

Here are the amendments MDFB request to be added to the bill. If these amendments are added or the hemp section of the bill were removed, MDFB would remove opposition to the bill

36-101.

- AMEND Page 18, lines 16-20: (C) (1) “CANNABIS” MEANS THE PLANT CANNABIS SATIVA L. AND ANY PART OF THE PLANT, INCLUDING ALL DERIVATIVES, EXTRACTS, CANNABINOIDS, ISOMERS, ACIDS, SALTS, AND SALTS OF ISOMERS, WHETHER GROWING OR NOT, WITH A DELTA-9-TETRAHYDROCANNABINOL CONCENTRATION GREATER THAN ~~0.3%~~ 1% ON A DRY WEIGHT BASIS.

36-1103.

- AMEND Page 69, lines 23-27: (A) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT SELL OR DISTRIBUTE A PRODUCT INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR INHALATION THAT CONTAINS MORE THAN ~~0.5 MILLIGRAMS OF TETRAHYDROCANNABINOL PER SERVING OR 2.5 MILLIGRAMS OF TETRAHYDROCANNABINOL~~ 1% DELTA-9- TETRAHYDROCANNABINOL ON A DRY WEIGHT BASIS PER PACKAGE UNLESS THE PERSON IS LICENSED UNDER § 36-401 OF THIS TITLE AND THE PRODUCT COMPLIES WITH THE:
- DELETE Page 70, lines 8-10: ~~(B) A PERSON MAY NOT SELL OR DISTRIBUTE A CANNABINOID PRODUCT THAT IS NOT DERIVED FROM NATURALLY OCCURRING BIOLOGICALLY ACTIVE CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS.~~

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES HB 556 UNLESS THESE AMENDMENTS ARE ADOPTED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396