



## **SB 525 – FAV**

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Griffith and Committee Members:

I am pleased to submit the following testimony for **Senate Bill 525: Economic Development - Program Participation - Cannabis Business Establishments** on behalf of Grow West LLC. By way of background, Grow West MD is a licensed cannabis cultivator and dispensary operator in Cumberland, MD.

Grow West MD was founded in 2016 by our family, Maryland small business owner/operators and life-long residents of Maryland.

Aware of the opportunity the business could bring to residents of a region deeply affected by the retreat of industry, we chose to build our cultivation center and dispensary in Cumberland. Grow West now occupies the former Kelly Springfield Tire Manufacturing Complex, which was sitting idle for almost three decades. Bringing this property back to life not only provided an ongoing economic and strong psychological boost to the region but placed it back on the tax rolls.

From the beginning, Grow West invested in the community. Our construction projects, which transformed the Kelly Buildings into a gleaming modern cultivation center, employed local contractors and tradespeople for over 24 months.

With only eighteen employees in 2018, the Grow West team is now one hundred fifty employees strong. Grow West provides good jobs, sustaining wages, health benefits and 401K's, allowing employees to stay in their towns, purchase homes and cars, support local business, economic development and build a strong community. Our company is a major contributor to community events and vital community assets like the Western Maryland Food



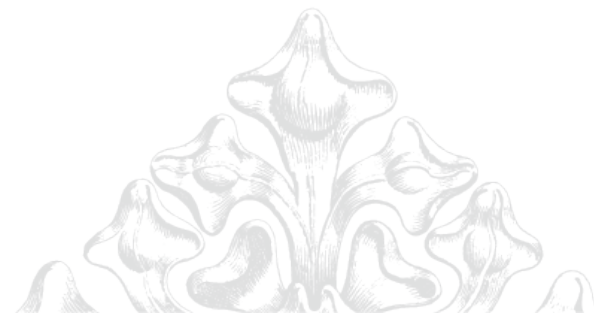
Bank. A recent Cumberland Times-News article included interviews with our employees. That article is appended to this testimony.

As a major employer in Allegany County, Grow West is currently excluded from One Maryland Tax Credit, Job Creation Tax Credit, and other programs targeted for communities in Western Maryland and Baltimore City. These important tax incentives are available not available to cannabis companies but are offered to other businesses, many of whom make less of a positive economic impact.

We respectfully ask this Committee, give favorable consideration to SB 525. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. Should you or your staff have any questions regarding these matters, I can be reached at [susan.valois@growwestmd.com](mailto:susan.valois@growwestmd.com).

Sincerely,

Susan D. Valois, President, Chairman of the Board  
Grow West MD





*Grow West*  
← MD. →

CANNABIS COMPANY

