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March 8, 2023

**SB 516 (HB 556) CANNABIS REFORM
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

GasGuide LLC is a Maryland domiciled company with a track record of safely and securely delivering cannabis products to patient consumers of medical cannabis and capable of performing the same level of service in the adult-use market. We submit this written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 516(HB 556), with amendments.

The legalization of cannabis is a major step forward that will create many new opportunities for entrepreneurs, however, as with any valuable commodity, there are risks associated with transporting cannabis. These risks can range from theft and diversion to accidents and other incidents that could compromise public safety.

While we are supportive of the overall goal of the Cannabis Reform legislation, we are also here today to express our opposition to the "ice cream truck" model of dispensing cannabis. While this model may seem like an attractive option for some, there are several significant reasons why the legislature should exercise restraint.

First and most importantly, the "ice cream truck" model as suggested by the legislation would circumvent the legislative intent of the bill to ensure that cannabis is not available to children and those under 21 years of age. Unlike traditional dispensaries, which are typically located in discrete locations and require proof of age for entry, the "ice cream truck" model would bring cannabis directly to residential areas, whereby minors could potentially have access to products. Moreover, while this model may seem just an innocuous matter of convenience, it is ripe with several other significant risks, including theft and robbery.

In states where this model has been unsuccessfully adopted, there have been numerous reports of proverbial "weed trucks" targeted by criminals. In Los Angeles, a "weed truck" was robbed at gunpoint. In another incident, a "weed truck" was shot at by unknown assailants. These incidents highlight the potential dangers of adopting this delivery model.

These incidents illustrate the risks associated with the "ice cream truck" model of dispensing cannabis. By bringing cannabis directly to residential areas, these vehicles are more vulnerable to theft and other criminal activity, putting both customers and employees at risk. These incidents will also assuredly create negative publicity and pushback from local communities, all of which will ultimately undermine any success hoped to be realized by legalizing cannabis in Maryland.

It is important for the legislature to carefully weigh the significant potential risks and drawbacks against the very minimal benefits of an "ice cream truck" model for dispensing cannabis before implementing any policies that would prop up this ancillary business model. While the "ice cream truck" model seems like an innovative way to dispense cannabis, it is ultimately a risky and ill-advised approach that could have serious consequences for public safety and the legal cannabis industry as a whole.

By maintaining clear guidelines for the secure transportation of cannabis, we can ensure that this valuable plant is transported safely and securely, and that it is not diverted into the illicit market. This not only helps to protect the public; it also helps promote the growth and success of a legal and sustainable cannabis industry in Maryland.

We respectfully ask that you support the establishment of clear regulations for the secure transportation of cannabis in Maryland. By doing so, we can ensure that this valuable plant is treated with the respect and care that it deserves, and that it is used for its intended purpose - to improve the lives of those who use it.

Recommendations for Senate Bill 516:

- Make explicit the role that secured transport is allowed to transport last mile to the patient/consumer for dispensaries with both standard and micro licenses.
- All drivers should have to be registered as "agents" with the commission when it switches over to adult use.
- Drivers should be permitted to be independent contractors of the secured transport/delivery company.
- There should be tax incentives or rebates for maintaining a socially equitable workforce.
- Additional state tax incentives (in addition to current) for the use of electric vehicles in the delivery and transport of cannabis.
- Ensure that all dispensaries adhere to the same rules and regulations governing secure transport/ delivery licensees, when operating their own delivery services.
- The current regulations require that the transport company have the vehicles in use registered and insured by the company. We need language that ensures this model remains in effect.

Please vote favorable with amendments for Senate Bill 516. Thank you for all of your work on this important and transformative bill.