

Hallaway LLC, dba Star Buds  
5975 Belair Rd  
Baltimore MD 21202

March 7, 2023

To: Finance, Budget & Taxation Committee – State of Maryland

RE: Senate Bill 516 - Cannabis Reform

Good afternoon, members of the Finance Committee and Chairman:

My name is Carissa Cartalemi, I am Owner/Operator of Star Buds, a medical dispensary operating at 5975 Belair Rd in Baltimore city for the last 5 years. I am here today to urge you to **support with amendments Senate Bill 516, Cannabis Reform.**

This bill needs the following amendments:

1. **Lower the # of proposed micro dispensary (delivery) licenses to 50, same as consumption lounges.** We do not yet know the full scope of these licenses therefore we should start with a lower # of them. We can always add more later. Below is a picture of an ice-cream cart style “micro dispensary” from Tennessee



Is this the type of businesses that we will see pop-up in MD? We simply don't know and until we do it's best to play it safe. Lowering the # of micro dispensaries also protects the investment of the social equity licenses.

2. **Add explicit language allowing standard dispensaries the ability to continue delivering.** My dispensary has invested a lot of money and resources into delivery, along with many other dispensaries. We would have to let staff go in the event we can no longer deliver. This matter was not addressed by the amendments proposed in HB 556 so we are depending on you to fix this now.
3. **Strike HB 556's Subtitle 3611.D.1.1 & D.1.3 which prohibits dispensaries from repackaging and rolling cannabis.** Repackaging keeps our costs low and helps independent dispensaries compete with big Multi State Operators. It is so important in fact that we have invested a lot of money in staffing and equipment to roll and repackage in house. Leaving this language in the bill would have the unintended effect of reducing our workforce by 21%. There is very little risk of diversion in dispensary repackaging. In fact if you go on [MMCC's website which lists all sanctions, there are no diversion sanctions listed involving dispensary repackaging.](#)
4. **Allow dispensary owners to operate consumption lounges.** Dispensary-operated consumption lounges are the safest way to introduce adult-use cannabis. We have knowledge of the safety and security procedures needed, as well as a team of dispensary agents with 5 years of experience dispensing cannabis. We are the people you want to be dispensing cannabis to adults 21& over for public consumption, please do not leave us out of this license-type.
5. **Amend the renewal fee language to a reasonable flat based on an anticipated increase in revenue.** Our current fee is \$40,000 annually. According to data from other states and considering how many additional licenses are being added to the market, we can expect an increase of 2-3x our current traffic/revenue. Make the annual renewal fee 2-3x what it is now.

Thank you taking the time to listen to me speak on this matter and again **please vote favorable with amendments on SB 516.**

Sincerely,

Carissa Cartalemi  
Owner Operator  
Star Buds Baltimore