

Support of HB 1229 -The Kratom Consumer Protection Act, with Amendments  
Maryland Senate Finance Committee hearing Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly.

I am pleased to offer both in-person testimony and a written kratom science update summary.

My opinions are consistent with the most recent science summarized in the December 2023 kratom science update and my prior testimony on this matter in February 2024 and February 2020, and bipartisan event in the United States Capital in December 2023 that was intended to inform potential additional national support of kratom research and regulatory oversight. Also see the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) kratom facts website for the latest kratom science.

My opinions flow from my experience in the evaluation of substance safety and potential therapeutic benefits including use to combat addiction and overdose since the 1970s. That has led to more than 500 publications and reports on these matters, including Surgeon General's Reports, and reports by the World Health Organization, and NIDA which I previously served as Chief of Clinical Pharmacology and Abuse Potential Assessment. My opinions are my own.

For more than one decade through my efforts at PinneyAssociates I have researched kratom safety and therapeutic use and the place of kratom in public health including as path away from opioids and the risks of opioid addiction and overdose for some kratom consumers. This includes advising the American Kratom Association on kratom science and regulatory needs, as well as sponsors of kratom submissions to the US Food and Drug Administration.

In brief, kratom is generally safely used by millions of primarily adult consumers, across the United States, which likely include approximately 200,000 in Maryland. Most use for general health and well-being, either because they find kratom helpful and tolerable, and in some cases more so than prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and/or they prefer natural products and derivatives in place of or as supplements to FDA approved medicines.

The main risks of kratom use are contaminated and adulterated products. Standards need to be put into place in Maryland as is occurring in 11 other states, but Maryland can take steps now to ensure that kratom is not represented as an approved FDA drug and prohibit sales to minors.

Regulation of consumer products is an evidence-based evolving process and passage of this bill could ensure access to adult consumers and provide the foundation for potential additional oversight of kratom sold in Maryland hopefully eventually at the national level by FDA regulation.

Respectfully submitted,

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