



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

March 27, 2025

Committee: House Economic Matters Committee

Bill: SB 215 - Cannabis Reform - Revisions

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports SB 215, with a critical amendment. The bill as amended makes alterations to the manner in which on-site consumption facilities may operate. It also makes a small but significant alteration to the local land use portion of the cannabis law, placing a shot clock by which a local government must adopt an ordinance addressing distance requirements between dispensaries and certain sensitive properties otherwise be subject to the distances in State law. The need for cannabis licensees to have certainty in distance requirements is understandable and the proposed amendment allows for that without forever preempting local decisionmakers.

MML worked closely with the General Assembly on establishing the distances set in State law and the authority for local governments to reduce those distances. While several years have passed since the law was enacted, the law has been amended on this issue including by adding new sensitive properties and altering the distance to which a local government may set between dispensaries. Long story short, the playing field has shifted since the law first took effect.

The provision on page 10, lines 20-23 would prohibit a local government from adopting an ordinance pertaining to the distance requirements between cannabis dispensaries and sensitive properties after July 1, 2025. This is problematic in that a mayor and council now may not be interested in adjusting local distance requirements but future local governing bodies may. There may also be additional changes to State law that would spur local governments to act. Our amendment is to remove the date set in the bill. This will still allow the State distance requirements to be used as a baseline in instances where a local government has not taken action.

(1) A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION THAT HAS NOT ADOPTED AN ORDINANCE UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, IS SUBJECT TO THE DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests a favorable report with the above amendment on Senate Bill 215. For more information, please contact Bill Jorch, Director, Public Policy and Research at billj@mdmunicipal.org. Thank you in advance for your consideration.