



March 27, 2025

The Honorable C.T. Wilson  
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee  
230 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Senate Bill 0215 – Cannabis Reform – Revisions**  
*FAVORABLE*

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) in SUPPORT of crossover bill SB0215 – Cannabis Reform – Revisions as amended by the Senate Finance Committee.

The original version of this bill proposed a model for on-site consumption businesses and created a pathway for event registration. As amended, SB0215 removes MCA’s explicit authorization to issue on-site consumption licenses in the second round and does not establish a firm timeline issuing those licenses in subsequent rounds. It also strikes event authorizations in their entirety. **These changes will delay the implementation of these licensing and registration categories, giving MCA and this body additional time to work out kinks and determine market necessity.**

The Senate amendments make a number of other critical clarifications to statute. These include closing a perceived loophole in the zoning standards for cannabis businesses by clarifying that any political subdivision that has not adopted an ordinance regarding distance requirements for dispensaries before July 1, 2025 is subject to the statewide standards for dispensaries that are set in statute, i.e. 500 feet from pre-existing sensitive area or 1,000 feet from another dispensary. This amendment will assist social equity conditional licensees who are facing delays and hurdles to securing a properly zoned location for their business due to some jurisdictions failing to pass a zoning ordinance for cannabis businesses.

The amended version also extends the deadline for dispensaries that were operational under the medical program to continue delivering medical cannabis to patients and caregivers to June 30, 2026. At that point, micro dispensaries will take over the delivery arm of Maryland’s cannabis market. This extension ensures continued access to cannabis delivery for our medical patients, while providing an additional 12 months for new businesses to become operational.

Finally, it creates an exemption to statutory transfer restrictions for businesses who intend to sell the license to its employees through an employee stock ownership plan, or ESOP. As the amendment is drafted, an ESOP must meet federal standards for designation as an ESOP. The MCA supports ESOPs as a strategy for strengthening the cannabis workforce because they encourage employee wealth building, profit sharing, and job satisfaction.

The MCA believes these amendments present the best possible outcome for the Maryland cannabis market. The postponement of on-site licenses and events allow more time for MCA to work with this body and its public health and law enforcement partners to continue to strengthen the health and safety considerations of the business models. Importantly, the Senate amendments bolster the market by clarifying zoning restrictions for dispensaries, extending medical cannabis deliveries one more year, and permitting ESOPs.

The MCA is committed to working with the House Economic Matters Committee on this important legislation, and we urge a favorable vote. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact me at [alison.butler@maryland.gov](mailto:alison.butler@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

*Alison Butler*

Alison Butler  
Division Chief of Policy Implementation  
Policy & Government Affairs, Maryland Cannabis Administration