

Good afternoon, Chairman and distinguished members of the Health Committee.

My name is Scott Williams and I am an Annapolis Eastport resident speaking in opposition to SB820 as currently written.

I want to be clear: I am not here to defend dangerous products. The rise of concentrated, semi-synthetic 7-hydroxymitragynine products — often called "7-OH" — flooding gas stations and smoke shops is a legitimate public health concern, and I fully support targeted enforcement against them.

But SB820, as written, goes far dangerously further. By granting the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission broad authority to seize and destroy any "unauthorized consumable product," it creates a legal framework where plain, unadulterated kratom leaf powder — a product used daily by an estimated 200,000 Marylanders — could be banned on the sole basis that the FDA has not yet formally approved it as a dietary ingredient. That is a moving target tied to federal inaction, not to actual product safety.

Maryland already passed the Kratom Consumer Protection Act in 2024. That law bans adulteration, requires labeling, and prohibits sales to minors. HB1523 should build on that framework — not bulldoze it.

Here is the compromise I am asking this committee to adopt:

One: Explicitly exempt unadulterated kratom leaf powder — products containing only naturally occurring alkaloid ratios consistent with the *mitragyna speciosa* plant — from the definition of "unauthorized consumable product," regardless of FDA approval status.

Two: Define "unauthorized" to specifically capture products where 7-hydroxymitragynine content exceeds two percent of total alkaloid composition by weight, or more than one milligram per serving — thresholds that are scientifically impossible to achieve in natural, unprocessed kratom powder, and already adopted by states like Arizona, Utah, Oklahoma, and Texas.

These targeted amendments accomplish the real goal: removing dangerous synthetic and concentrated 7-OH products from shelves, while protecting the hundreds of thousands of adult Marylanders who rely on natural kratom leaf as part of their daily wellness routine.

Broad seizure authority without these guardrails doesn't protect consumers — it punishes them.

PS I'll leave you with one last hint to be prepared to have replacement products that are already on shelves that will NOT be affected by the verbiage in this bill. I would be happy to work with your staff to identify them with the compromise of omitting kratom powder from the ban.

I urge this committee to amend HB1523 accordingly. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Scott Williams