



February 5, 2025

Honorable Chair Senator Pamela Beidle
MGA Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0217

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The Office of Social Equity respectfully submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 0217,
Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund – Alterations

The Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund is a critical mechanism for reinvesting cannabis tax revenue into communities most harmed by past cannabis enforcement. Senate Bill 0217 strengthens the administration of the fund by clarifying roles, reinforcing county planning requirements, and improving coordination between counties and the Office of Social Equity.

Senate Bill 0217 provides counties with clearer guidance on identifying impacted communities and on allowable uses of CRRF resources. By requiring counties to clearly articulate how proposed expenditures align with authorized uses, the bill promotes transparency and accountability while preserving flexibility to address local priorities. The requirement that counties consult with the Office of Social Equity when developing or updating local CRRF plans will help ensure reinvestment efforts remain consistent statewide and centered on addressing the long-term harms of cannabis criminalization.

The Office of Social Equity notes that the bill expands its advisory role in supporting counties' CRRF planning efforts. We support this expanded role and believe it will strengthen implementation. At the same time, the bill does not currently include additional resources to support the staffing or administrative capacity necessary to carry out these responsibilities. We look forward to continued discussions around aligning resources to support the effective implementation of this important work.

For these reasons, the Office of Social Equity supports Senate Bill 0217 and respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at audrey.johnson@maryland.gov or Courtney Davis, Deputy Director, at courtney.davis@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,
Audrey Johnson
Executive Director
Office of Social Equity