



December 10, 2024

Senator Shane Wilkin, Chair
Ohio Senate General Government Committee
1 Capital Square
Ohio Senate Building, Room 050
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: SB 326 – Sales in Marijuana Dispensaries

Dear Senator Wilkin,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee last week to address our organization’s opposition to Senate Bill 326. Since that time, we have reviewed an alternative that may be considered by your committee that involves moving hemp regulation under the recreational marijuana system in Ohio. This would make most hemp products only available for sale in the limited number of marijuana dispensaries.

We write to say that moving hemp products under the marijuana regulatory system is, for all practical purposes, a ban by another name, and it will shutter businesses whose owners sought to invest in a new industry that this legislature created in 2019 following federal hemp legalization.

Whether through the current ban in SB 326 or proposals for dispensary only sales, we know retail businesses, including those selling emerging hemp beverage products, will be negatively impacted by adopting this type of policy. Ohio-based CBD/hemp stores, with hard-working owners represented in your committee last week, will surely close with no means to enter the monopolistic world of marijuana dispensary licensing that the marijuana industry created for itself. Those owners specifically addressed why customers come to them and not dispensaries by explaining that most are over the age of 50 and looking for natural relief and wellness options without the intoxicating effects of marijuana. Their customers want to visit their local retailer for hemp products and are not likely to visit a dispensary with customers seeking a high.

As we noted in our testimony, the U.S. Hemp Roundtable is committed to safe hemp and CBD products. We have long supported self-regulation of the industry, encouraging third party testing, proper labeling and transparency, and other regulations to encourage responsible sales and use of hemp products. We support legislative changes in Ohio which would create stronger enforcement against violators, licensing for manufacturers and sellers, independent testing of hemp products, adequate labeling which prohibits child-enticing images, and age restrictions on the sale of hemp-derived consumable products.

Bans, and limitations on access that act like bans, will only support illicit sales of these products when the legislature seems to want more control. We respectfully submit that a strong regulatory approach to hemp products, without bans, is the best path to address the legislature's goals, and it is also best for the preservation of hemp-related businesses, hemp-product sales, and consumer choice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Miller
General Counsel
U.S. Hemp Roundtable

Cc Ohio Senate General Government Committee

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