



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chairman
House Committee on Corporations
State House, House Lounge
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 7231A: Kratom Consumer Protection Act

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the House Corporations Committee,

I write today to express opposition to HB7231A, sponsored by Representative John Edwards, legislation that authorizes and regulates the distribution of “kratom,” a substance that the National Institute on Drug Abuse notes can produce opioid and stimulant-like effects. More specifically, the amendment requires the “consumer protection unit” within the Attorney General’s Office to handle the annual registration of kratom products.

Placing the regulation of kratom within the Attorney General’s Office is problematic for a number of reasons. First, this Office does not currently have a “consumer protection unit” established in statute. Under my Administration, and at my discretion, our Consumer and Economic Justice Unit focuses on commercial transactions and their impact on Rhode Island consumers. The unit does not license, regulate or study the effects of drugs like kratom – and indeed it never has under prior attorneys general. This Office quite simply lacks the knowledge and expertise to undertake the significant role of regulation of a new controlled substance.

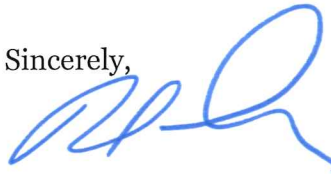
And this regulatory role would be costly. The legislation would obligate my Office to take on a substantial new administrative function, requiring the Office to make determinations as to registration requirements, find and obtain independent third-party testing at laboratories, accept registration fees and issue fines for violations, and handle administrative hearings upon request.

If this legislation were to pass, we would need at least four (4) additional full-time employees, including at least one attorney, a non-lawyer expert in the field of drug regulation, an investigator, and additional administrative staff. Even with these additional resources, I would respectfully oppose this legislation as it is not within the scope or expertise of the Office’s work. Simply put, this is a function that, if it belongs anywhere, should be placed elsewhere in state government.

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
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As always, I appreciate the Committee's consideration and am available for any further questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Neronha", with a large loop at the end.

Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General