



April 8, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chairman, House Committee on Corporations
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: H 5829 – An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – The Rhode Island Cannabis Act

Dear Chairman Solomon,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on House Bill 5829. The Cannabis Control Commission appreciates the General Assembly's continued attention to the long-term impacts of past cannabis prohibition and its efforts to embed equity into the broader cannabis statutory framework within the Rhode Island Cannabis Act. We understand and value this bill's intent to direct cannabis tax revenue toward addressing systemic harms in communities most impacted by past enforcement practices, and we welcome continued dialogue on how to achieve those goals in a sustainable and effective manner.

We acknowledge the importance of investing in areas such as housing, education, public health, and youth development, and we celebrate the vision behind establishing a Disproportionately Impacted Areas Investment Fund. The intent to leverage cannabis revenue as a tool for advancing equity and repairing historical injustices is deeply important and reflective of a growing understanding of cannabis-related harms beyond the criminal legal system.

That said, we respectfully raise a concern regarding the Commission's proposed role in administering this fund. While we are committed to advancing the equity goals outlined in the legislation and can serve as a strategic partner in supporting such work, our agency is fundamentally a regulatory body. The day-to-day administration of a fund with broad social service objectives would be better suited to agencies with the infrastructure, subject-matter expertise, and operational capacity to effectively manage such wide-ranging grant distribution.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with the General Assembly to ensure that cannabis policy in Rhode Island continues to move forward with equity, integrity, and long-term impact at the forefront.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Ahern, Chairperson
Rhode Island Cannabis Control Commission

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations
The Honorable Leonela Felix
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy