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MMP-CC006

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April 8, 2025

Chairman Solomon

House Committee on Corporations

Rhode Island General Assembly

Providence, RI

RE: Formal Opposition to House Bill H6056

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chief Executive Officer and owner of Mother Earth Wellness, a licensed compassion center (MMP-CC006) operating in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. On behalf of our entire organization, I am submitting this letter to express our strong opposition to House Bill H6056, which would permit the sale of intoxicating hemp-derived THC beverages in liquor stores across the state.

As a licensed cannabis operator, we are subject to some of the most comprehensive regulations in Rhode Island's commercial market. Our business, along with other licensed cultivators and retailers, operates under the direct oversight of the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC), and is held to exacting standards relating to testing, security, packaging, labeling, and taxation. Allowing intoxicating hemp-derived products to be sold outside of this framework—particularly in establishments not governed by cannabis-specific regulations—creates a parallel marketplace that is neither equitable nor safe.

The introduction of psychoactive THC products into liquor stores fundamentally undermines Rhode Island's established regulatory model for cannabis. These hemp-derived beverages, while legally distinct under federal law, produce intoxicating effects similar to marijuana-derived THC but often bypass state-level testing requirements. Unlike dispensary-sold products, hemp-derived items are not consistently tested for potency, pesticides, heavy metals, or other contaminants. This inconsistency not only poses direct risks to consumer health but also erodes the public's confidence in the overall cannabis supply chain.

Additionally, liquor stores are not equipped to manage the unique compliance obligations associated with cannabis product sales. They are not staffed or trained to verify age with the same rigor as dispensaries, nor are they required to provide the consumer education necessary to guide responsible THC consumption. The lack of oversight in this regard increases the risk of underage access, misuse, and overconsumption—particularly with hemp beverages that often feature unclear labeling and unpredictable dosages.

Moreover, this bill exploits legal ambiguities in the 2018 Farm Bill, allowing hemp-derived Delta-9 THC products to enter the market through regulatory loopholes rather than through careful review and licensure. This not only disadvantages licensed operators who follow the law and invest heavily in compliance, but it also dilutes the authority and purpose of the CCC, whose responsibility is to ensure cannabis-related products are sold responsibly and safely in Rhode Island.

There are also substantial public health concerns associated with the co-location of intoxicating THC products and alcohol. Permitting the sale of hemp-derived THC drinks in liquor stores significantly increases the likelihood of co-use, which is associated with amplified impairment and elevated risks of motor vehicle accidents. The decision to introduce THC products into alcohol-focused retail environments raises serious red flags in terms of public safety and responsible substance management.

Finally, passing this legislation would signal a retreat from Rhode Island's commitment to a well-regulated, transparent, and accountable cannabis industry. The state has taken great strides to create a system that ensures safe access, consumer protection, and equitable economic opportunity. Undermining that system by enabling an unregulated, less accountable distribution channel is not only unfair to licensed operators—it is a step backwards for the cannabis industry as a whole.

For these reasons, Mother Earth Wellness urges the Committee to reject House Bill H6056 in its current form. We appreciate your time, consideration, and commitment to maintaining a responsible and coherent regulatory framework for cannabis in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,



Joseph Rakuris
Chief Executive Officer
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Pawtucket, RI