

THE OHIO COUNCIL OF

Retail Merchants

The voice of retail since 1922

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March 13, 2019

The Honorable Frank Hoagland, Chairman
Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
Statehouse
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Hoagland and members of the Committee,

It is my pleasure to offer support for Senate Bill 57 on behalf of the members of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, the voice of the retail industry in Ohio. The Council applauds Senators Hill and Huffman for taking the lead on the decriminalization of industrial hemp and hemp-derived products such as cannabidiol (CBD) oil.

As you have heard, Ohio is one of only a handful of states that have not already legalized hemp. States that have done so are reaping the benefits economically as the growth in the sale of hemp-derived products has skyrocketed. Brick-and-mortar stores in those states are finding wild success in product sales. According to the *Hemp Business Journal*, brick-and-mortar sales represented about 14 percent of the \$190 million in US hemp-based CBD sales in 2017, with those numbers expected to increase to 28 percent of \$650 million in sales by 2022.

It is unfortunate that Ohio retailers cannot currently benefit from the “gold rush” mentality that surrounds the sale of products containing hemp derivatives. Thanks to consumer demand, the production of these products is booming and retail outlets in most other states are taking full advantage of the opportunity for the increased sales. High-end department stores selling skin care products containing CBD oil have trouble keeping it on the shelves. Ironically, one of those skin care lines is owned by an Ohio business owner who must produce and sell his products in a state other than his own.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for Senate Bill 57 and we respectfully urge your support as well. Once again, we thank Senators Hill and Huffman for this pro-consumer, pro-retail, pro-Ohio measure that will provide for significant business growth and prosperity in Ohio going forward.

Sincerely,



Lora L. Miller
Director of Governmental Affairs & Public Relations

Council Affiliates

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on Ohio's Future