

**Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 86**  
**Senate General Government Committee**  
**Mike Getlin, Nectar Markets of Ohio**  
**December 4, 2023**

Chair Rulli, Ranking Member DeMora and Members of the Senate General Government Committee, my name is Mike Getlin and I am the founder and Board Chair of the Cannabis Industry Alliance of Oregon, the Pacific Northwest's largest cannabis industry trade association. I am also Director of Licensing & Public Affairs for Nectar Markets of Ohio, which operates three licensed medical dispensaries here in Ohio.

Through my seven years of public policy work on adult use Marijuana issues in multiple states, I have seen many different approaches to regulation and taxation. I'd like to start by commending the work that this committee has done to understand both the benefits and risks associated with adult use legalization. That said, we have a long way to go to get it right in Ohio, and a lot to consider. Respectfully, this entire system cannot be built in three days.

There are plenty of issues in the substitute bill that I am happy to address when time allows, but I'd like to focus on one critical point that requires immediate action: we should not have legal marijuana in Ohio with no legal place to get it. As you have already stated, the long-term, primary goal of Ohio's adult use program must be the elimination of the illicit market.

Ensuring that the cannabis Ohioans consume is tested, tracked, taxed, unadulterated, and sold only to adults over 21, must come before all other considerations. As such, we cannot allow legalization without legal paths to purchase. If we do, we will simply supercharge criminal operators with massive cash infusions while we do the granular detail work of building out an adult use program.

Luckily, you already have a highly sophisticated and regulated legal distribution system in Ohio's medical marijuana program. We must allow adults 21 years of age and older with valid, state-issued identification to purchase limited amounts of adult use cannabis from medical dispensaries, with or without medical cards.

Over the next year, Ohioans will spend well over a billion dollars on adult use marijuana in Ohio. If we allow access to our medical dispensaries for adult use consumers, much of that will flow to safer, tested and taxed products that will ALWAYS come with a careful ID verification process, and child-proof packaging. If not, people will be forced to buy their now-legal cannabis from illegal sources. That illicit cannabis will not be tested for pesticides, potency, and adulterants such as heavy metals and mold. It will also not be taxed. By failing to allow immediate access to our existing dispensaries, we will simply be handing over a billion dollars in small bills to criminal operators in the next year.

In other states such as New York and California, where legalization came well before legal access for most citizens, the results have been catastrophic. There are critical conversations to be had

about taxes, home grows, hemp products, market controls, and many other issues. But this one must come first, or citizens will be facing long term public safety and health consequences that can be avoided with this simple action.

Thank you again for your careful consideration and leadership on these issues.