

## **Subject: SB 326 – A Harmful Approach to Ohio’s Hemp Industry and Small Businesses**

Dear Ranking Members,

As a small business owner and wellness consultant in Ohio’s growing hemp industry, I must express my strong opposition to SB 326. This bill, under the guise of public safety, is an ill-conceived measure that threatens Ohio’s hemp industry, harms small businesses, and restricts consumer access to safe, affordable products.

### **Chronic Wellness Delivery: A Model for Safe and Responsible Innovation**

In January 2024, I launched Ohio’s first mobile smoke shop, Chronic Wellness Delivery, with the goal of providing responsible, consumer-focused access to hemp and cannabis products. We offer personalized consultations with wellness professionals to guide customers on their cannabis journeys and provide education on over 120 beneficial cannabinoids. We began in the hemp sector due to Ohio's restrictive cannabis laws, not by choice, but by necessity. As a longtime user of cannabis, I call hemp diet weed.

Our success demonstrates the potential of Ohio’s hemp industry when it is supported with sensible, science-backed regulations. However, SB 326 threatens to undo this progress by imposing arbitrary and restrictive limits on hemp-derived products, which would harm consumers and entrepreneurs alike.

### **Government Overreach: Monopolizing the Market Instead of Supporting Innovation**

The state’s approach to cannabis has long been marked by contradictions. After decades of criminalizing cannabis, Ohio now seeks to monopolize its sale, leaving small businesses like mine at a disadvantage. SB 326 reinforces outdated policies that protect a few select businesses rather than fostering a diverse, competitive market that supports innovation, job creation, and consumer choice.

Rather than advancing the responsible use of hemp, SB 326 attempts to impose blanket restrictions based on arbitrary thresholds that do nothing to improve public safety. It is an overreach that would stifle Ohio’s growing hemp market, potentially driving entrepreneurs out of business and limiting consumer access to beneficial products while creating a monopoly that steers consumers toward state-approved sales methods.

### **Punishing Innovation and Responsible Businesses**

Instead of supporting small businesses like mine, which have followed existing regulations and invested in compliance and consumer safety, SB 326 will punish innovation. By imposing a 0.5 mg Delta-9 THC per serving and 2 mg per package limit, the bill effectively bans the sale of many hemp-derived products that are currently safe, effective, and legal. These measures are not rooted in science and will only serve to limit consumer choice and harm small business owners.

## **Synthetic Cannabinoids: The Real Danger**

SB 326 unfairly targets natural cannabinoids while ignoring the significant risks posed by unregulated synthetic cannabinoids. While the FDA has approved synthetic cannabinoids like Marinol (dronabinol) and Epidiolex (CBD), these are produced under strict guidelines to ensure safety. However, the unregulated synthetic market continues to pose significant risks, as some producers use unsafe chemical processes to mass-produce synthetic cannabinoids.

In 1999, cannabis expert John Gettman criticized synthetic THC in Marinol for being less effective than full-spectrum cannabis, stating it missed many of the other beneficial compounds found in the plant. This perspective highlights the risks of focusing on synthetic cannabinoids while ignoring the safety and benefits of natural hemp-derived products.

## **Hemp's Safety and Economic Value**

Hemp-derived cannabinoids, by definition, contain less than 0.3% Delta-9 THC, making them far less intoxicating than cannabis and much safer for consumers looking for less intoxicating products. Hemp serves as a critical entry point for those exploring responsible cannabinoid use. By restricting hemp products, SB 326 would push consumers toward the unregulated black market, where safety standards and transparency are non-existent, or toward state-licensed dispensaries, raising a question about the reason for a hemp ban.

Hemp has an unparalleled safety record, with no known fatalities linked to its use. This stands in stark contrast to substances like opioids, which cause over 80,000 deaths annually. Cannabis, in its natural form, is far safer than other widely used substances, and its cannabinoids have a proven track record of benefiting consumers in a variety of ways.

## **Ohio's Missed Opportunity**

Ohio has a unique opportunity to become a leader in the hemp and cannabis industries by adopting balanced, science-backed regulations. However, SB 326 risks undermining this potential. Rather than stifling innovation with unnecessary restrictions, Ohio should support local businesses, foster job creation, and ensure safe access to hemp products.

Currently, few hemp products are produced in Ohio due to restrictive regulations. This bill will only exacerbate the issue, preventing small businesses from flourishing and missing out on the economic benefits that come from a thriving, regulated hemp market.

## **The Real Solution: Responsible, Science-Based Regulation**

Rather than passing SB 326, Ohio should focus on creating policies that balance consumer safety with business growth:

- **Align with Federal Standards:** Maintain the 0.3% Delta-9 THC by dry weight threshold established under the 2018 Farm Bill.

- **Regulate Synthetic Chemicals:** Focus on ensuring the safety and purity of chemicals used in unregulated synthetic cannabinoid production.
- **Rigorous Testing and Labeling:** Implement clear testing and labeling requirements for all hemp products to ensure consumer trust and safety.
- **Support Small Businesses:** Create an environment that fosters innovation and encourages the growth of local businesses.
- **Educate Consumers and Lawmakers:** Promote education about cannabinoids, their benefits, and responsible consumption.

## **Conclusion: Reject SB 326 and Build a Better Future**

SB 326 is not a solution—it is a harmful step backward that will limit consumer access, harm small businesses, and stifle innovation. Ohio must reject this bill and work with stakeholders to craft policies that protect consumers, support entrepreneurs, and build a thriving hemp and cannabis industry that can work together for the benefit of all. In short why exclude a plant in this cannabis family when the biggest issue we face is synthetic cannabinoids and how they are produced. Hemp provided legal groundwork and paved the way for cannabis legalization in Ohio. "I urge you to oppose SB 326 and instead examine how other states have successfully implemented science-based regulations that balance consumer safety with business innovation in the hemp industry."

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Don Holztrager  
Founder, Chronic Wellness Delivery