

I am writing to respectfully request protection for the continued legal use of the natural herbal supplement kratom.

I am a professional woman residing in Ohio, holding a master's degree and multiple professional certifications. I firmly believe that I would not have been able to achieve these accomplishments without access to Kratom.

Like many others, I credit this natural supplement with helping me reclaim my quality of life.

At age 26, I had back surgery. Over time, despite repeated requests for help as my condition worsened, I was continually prescribed oxycodone and Vicodin without further investigation into the underlying cause of my severe symptoms. In 2011, after three emergency room visits and numerous follow-up appointments, I temporarily lost the ability to walk for 11 days and endured prolonged, excruciating pain. It was only through the intervention of a perceptive physician that the true issue was identified.

In addition to my recovery, another complication resulted in a nick to the spinal fluid sac. This release of spinal fluid caused a leak and permanent nerve damage down my right leg.

Following surgery and the second procedure, I was prescribed increasing amounts of pain medication. Eventually, those medications were abruptly discontinued without a tapering plan or alternative support.

Although I continue to manage my condition through physical therapy, lifelong gabapentin treatment, and epidural injections one to two times per year, these measures do not fully address the constant, daily nerve pain and functional limitations I experience. I have also been informed that I may require a major spinal fusion in the future.

While my current treatments provide partial relief, they do not adequately manage the persistent aching and nerve-related discomfort that affects my daily life.

After exhausting conventional options, I sought a responsible, alternative solution. Kratom has been that solution. Its use has enabled me to remain productive, advance in my career, and even open a small business. It has allowed me to function, contribute to my community, and maintain independence.

I respectfully ask that kratom remain accessible to responsible adults who rely on it for pain management and quality of life. While any substance can be misused, it is critical that the actions of a few do not prevent access for those who depend on it as a safe and effective option. Removing access this natural product will have devastating consequences, similar to those seen with the access elimination of pain medication.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,
Chris Smith