

Chairperson, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the subject of kratom regulation. My Name is Tara Workman and I am a Chemical Dependency Counselor in Columbus Ohio, turned Kratom Advocate. Ive seen the effects of the opioid crisis up close. Working at many different modalities of recovery in detoxes, long term facilities, Suboxone and Methadone doctors offices, outpatient facilities and therapeutic communities. As I have done my research and reached out to the Kratom community I have learned much about the Origins, Leaf, and current stance of the community. In my professional opinion those who are taking the kratom leaf are stable, productive, intelligent members of society, not drug addicts. These include fire fighters, veterans, nurses, surgeons, police officers, those working in local and Ohio level news agencies, and even representatives and commits members just like you.

But today I am here to advocate on Kratom being codified into legality by regulating it with the Ohio Board of Agriculture.

Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) is not a synthetic laboratory invention. It is a tropical evergreen tree in the Rubiaceae family, the same botanical family as coffee. Like coffee, its alkaloid profile is influenced by soil composition, rainfall, and harvest timing.

The vast majority of kratom entering the United States is cultivated in Indonesia, particularly in West Kalimantan. But also cultivated in Malaysia, Thailand and Papua New Guinea.

It cannot grow heartily in Ohio. These regions share a **humid equatorial climate**. It is typically grown by smallholder farmers on modest plots of land.

It is not a monocropped industrial juggernaut... it is closer in structure to specialty coffee production than to pharmaceutical manufacturing.

The agricultural processing chain is straightforward:

- Leaves are hand-harvested.
- They are washed to remove field debris.
- They are dried, either sun-dried or indoor-dried depending on humidity.
- They are milled into powder.
- They are sieved and packaged for export.

There is 7 Hydroxymitragynine in the leaves, but at trace amounts usually lower than 1% of total alkaloid content. A standard dose of kratom would be 3 grams and

total amount of 7-Hydroxymitragynine in a 3 gram dose is approximately 0.3mg which is not enough to present effects in the brain. Someone with a garage lab had the bright idea a few years ago to begin chemistry experiments on the naturally occurring compound mitragynine. And began this horrible saga of selling these adulterated, concentrated, and unnatural products in smoke shops.

I and most responsible natural kratom users support the limitation of 7 Hydroxy Mitragynine being at or below 2% as outlined in the bill.

If there is a legitimate public health concern, it lies primarily in contamination risk not in the botany itself. Heavy metals, microbial contamination, or adulteration can occur when supply chains are opaque and unregulated.

From an agricultural science standpoint, variability is normal. You all tolerate it in tea, in coffee, in cacao, and in countless botanical supplements. What mitigates risk is not prohibition (cough Ohio Pharmaceutical Board cough) but good agricultural practices, contaminant testing, and transparent labeling.

That is an argument for standards: batch testing, age restrictions and labeling requirements. Which believe it or not I've seen most natural-vegetation-state-only small businesses around here already self regulating and have for years.

Science teaches us that when a botanical product is driven underground, quality control becomes more difficult, not less.

If you let contaminated grain into the market, it damages all grain producers. If one bad dairy operation cuts corners, the whole industry takes the hit.

If kratom remains unregulated, the worst-case scenarios are predictable: Dangerous Adulterated product, Media panic, Reactionary bans, And responsible agricultural suppliers and importers caught in the crossfire.

Thank you for your effort to coordinate these meetings in a swift manner opposite the Ohio Pharmaceutical Boards decision to schedule Natural Vegetation State Kratom, your open mindedness, and your attention to evidence-based policymaking