

Cool Digs INC

Saraquoia Bryant, President

596 E State St

Athens, Ohio 45701

House Judiciary Committee

Honorable Jim Thomas, Chairman

77 S High St, 11th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Thomas and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you. My name is Saraquoia Bryant, President of Cool Digs Inc. locally owned small business located in Athens, Ohio. I am writing to offer testimony on Substitute House Bill 56.

While this bill may be an improvement over House Bill 160, it still falls short of honoring the intent and promise of Issue 2. As Ohioans, we voted for access—specifically for 50 micro-cultivation licenses and 40 new dispensary licenses—designed to support small businesses, disadvantaged entrepreneurs, and local communities.

Our company provides garden supplies tailored for small-scale cultivators in southeast Ohio's medical cannabis sector. We are eager to grow alongside hemp and cannabis farmers in our community. Every day of delay in implementing Issue 2 costs us and others like us vital opportunities and income.

Athens County voted in favor of legalization by 78%. We imagined a future shaped by locally owned, craft cannabis businesses, much like the small breweries and tourism industries that already help define our region. Sub HB 56 jeopardizes that vision.

This bill funnels opportunities to large, wealthy players—often from outside Ohio—while excluding real Ohioans with knowledge, experience, and community ties. It restricts cannabis beverage sales

to current dispensaries, leaving out small, local small business and retailers. That's not what we voted for.

Even more concerning, Sub HB 56 redirects tax revenue from municipalities to the state's general fund. This undermines the local reinvestment that was central to public support for Issue 2. If no mechanism currently exists to return funds to our communities, I urge you to create one. That's your job.

Cannabis users are not public safety threats. This bill criminalizes harmless behavior, such as outdoor use or sharing between adults—actions that waste law enforcement resources and stigmatize responsible users.

Sub HB 56 erodes home rule and democratic decision-making. It dismantles a pathway to entrepreneurship for working Ohioans and replaces it with a corporate monopoly.

We are not passive observers. We are organizing a coalition of farmers, consumers, and advocates who will return in larger numbers to defend our rights and the law we passed.

Please reconsider this legislation. We ask that you stand with Ohio's voters, communities, and small businesses—not against them.

Sincerely,

Saraquoia Bryant

President, Cool Digs Inc.

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