



March 17, 2025

The Honorable Kristina Roegner
Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

***RE: SB 86 (Regulate and Tax Intoxicating Hemp, Drinkable Cannabinoid Products)
Proponent Testimony***

Dear Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Senate General Government Committee:

On behalf of the Ascension BioMedical, LLC, a Level II licensed cannabis cultivators in Ohio (“Ascension”), thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 86 (“SB 86”).

Ascension is a small Ohio business with all Ohio ownership. As a small company that is a cultivation only, we are disproportionately impacted by the large and growing market for intoxicating hemp products. Ohio’s market has been a unique struggle thanks, largely, to two components: the under-regulated Michigan market and the unregulated intoxicating hemp market. While larger operators have retail footprints and can push their own products in their retail footprint, the companies hurt most by the underperforming Ohio market are the small ones that could not afford to go out and buy a dispensary or 5 to push their own products. That means the big operators are effected, but the small operators in Ohio are the ones taking the majority of the hit from sales in the unregulated hemp market.

Here are a few reasons I am in favor of SB 86:

1. There are 10 shops within a 1.5 mile radius of my home selling intoxicating hemp.
2. Many of these shops now advertise themselves as a “dispensary” to increase foot traffic.
3. These shops:
 - a. Do not ask for ID, even for those clearly under 18.
 - b. Have intoxicating flower products sitting out on the counter where you can reach into the jar and pick the bud you want to smoke (“deli style”).
 - c. Sell real marijuana, which they will often admit came from the Michigan market under the “hemp loophole”.
4. Have products with THC well above the limits allowed in an Ohio regulated dispensary.
5. Will deliver to your home or have third party apps to deliver to the home.

If you go on DoorDash right now and type in “Delta 9,” you will be given a host of drinks and products that you can have delivered straight to your home. All “hemp derived” of course. This is in addition to literally an unlimited number of sites that sell products masquerading as hemp

and being sold under the “hemp loophole” and will mail them to any address you provide. My friend, a middle-school teacher, says that the number one cause for detention in her school is kids with vapes, including intoxicating hemp vapes. When they inquire where they come from, it is generally either from online or from a store near the school or the home.

These products are not tested. There is no certificate you can look at to find out what is in the product (or better yet, what is NOT in the product). If someone gets sick from the product, there is no way to track that product or effectuate a recall. All of these safeguards exist in the regulated Ohio marijuana program, but shocking do not exist for the intoxicating hemp products (nor the Michigan marijuana products masquerading as hemp-derived, and sold in Ohio vape shops). It is important to remember that Michigan allows commercial growing of marijuana outside. There are growers in Michigan spraying their outdoor-grown marijuana with chemicals and pesticides that are harmful when smoked, and thus not allowed in the Ohio regulated marijuana program. Yet teenagers can buy these pesticide-sprayed products at any vape shop by their home.

Even worse, a recent article determined that 95% of “hemp-derived” products, including 97% of vape products, contained cannabinoids produced synthetically instead of naturally extracted from the plant. “Many of the lab-made cannabinoids found in our analysis are far more potent than natural delta-9 THC, meaning a product’s psychoactive effects may be dramatically understated if potency is assessed solely by delta-9 THC content...Novel and unknown isomers associated with chemically synthesized cannabinoids, like delta-8 THC, may present significant risks due to their unpredictable chemical and physical properties.” The article went on to state that “Some products also tested positive for the presence of kratom, hallucinogenic mushrooms, or similar psychoactive substances.”

You will never be “upsold” to harder drugs or buy marijuana laced with harder drugs in an Ohio, regulated dispensary. The same cannot be said for the products coming out of these vape shops. If you want to reduce the amount of “laced” products consumers have access to, and thereby reduce the number of overdoses and the number of people addicted to hard drugs, limit your intoxicating products to Ohio dispensaries, where:

1. The employees undergo a background check every 2 years;
2. The owners undergo a background check every 2 years;
3. The products are always locked up in a vault;
4. The entire premises is on camera, inside and outside, 24/7/365 and the State of Ohio has live access to those cameras;
5. Every product is tested by independent, third party labs licensed by the State of Ohio.

The provisions of SB 86 go a long way toward addressing both public health and safety and market issues stemming from unregulated intoxicating hemp sales. As such, Ascension supports the bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



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Ascension BioMedical, LLC