

## **Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee**

### **Proponent Testimony—Written SB 261**

**November 30, 2021**

Chair Rulli, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes and Members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 261. My name is Dina Rollman and I am the SVP for Government Affairs for Green Thumb Industries (GTI). GTI is a leading national cannabis consumer packaged goods company and owner of Rise dispensaries. GTI owns and operates five medical cannabis dispensaries in Ohio. GTI also holds an Ohio processor license and a provisional Level I cultivator license in Toledo, Ohio.

I would like to first thank Senator Stephen Huffman for his leadership and for his sponsorship of SB 261. We also appreciate Minority Leader Yuko's continued support of the medical marijuana industry in Ohio and thank him for joining Sen. Huffman in cosponsoring SB 261. GTI joins the Ohio Medical Cannabis Industry Association (OMCIA) and other proponents in supporting this important legislation.

GTI appreciates the good working relationship with the Ohio regulatory agencies. However, GTI is supportive of the proposed consolidation of Ohio's Medical Marijuana Control Program. In the five years since the enactment of HB 523 (131<sup>st</sup> General Assembly), it has become clear that having three different regulating agencies oversee the Program creates additional regulatory costs and makes it harder to do business in the state. Consolidating regulatory oversight to one regulatory body would be much more efficient and make Ohio more business friendly for Ohio's medical marijuana operators and license holders. We also think consolidation would be beneficial to Ohio patients. The proposed changes in SB 261 create a regulatory framework more in line with what we have seen across the country.

GTI is very pleased that SB 261 is patient-focused and attempts to drive down the cost of medical cannabis by establishing a metric of 1000-patients per dispensary. We anticipate that the bill's proposed changes to cultivator testing requirements will also help to drive down the overall cost to patients. But the most patient-centered change in the legislation is the expansion of both, the types of medical conditions eligible for treatment and the permissible forms of medical marijuana that may be dispensed.

As the bill sponsors, this Committee, and the Ohio Senate continues to move SB 261 through the legislative process, I do have two specific amendments to offer for consideration that GTI believes are necessary to ensure that Ohio's Medical Marijuana Control Program is business friendly moving forward. First, we propose the removal of the proposed change in RC 3796.18(A)(3) on page 46, lines 1289-1295. As drafted, this language creates a conflict between state and federal law and is not necessary.

GTI also recommends that the language in the SB 261 related to cultivator square footage be removed. The proposed square footage language in RC 3796.18(D) on pages 46-47, lines 1310-1317 should not be codified; square footage limits are currently defined in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3796:2-1-09. Proposed changes to existing cultivation square footage limits are best suited to be addressed by stakeholders and the Department of Commerce this coming Spring when Rule 3796:2-1-09 will be reviewed as part of the required JCARR five-year rule review process. In the alternative, should square footage changes be made in statute, GTI advocates for parity with respect to increases in square footage between a Level and a Level II cultivator.

On behalf of GTI, I thank you again for this opportunity to provide support for SB 261. I welcome the opportunity to continue to work with Senator Huffman, Minority Leader Yuko and this Committee on amendments we believe will make the bill even stronger.