

February 1, 2016

Co-Chairs Lininger and Burdick, Members of the Committee,

My name is Les Helgeson and I would like to offer the following comments on HB 4014 and SB 1511.

While supportive of many changes contained in both bills, I implore you to reject the change in residency requirements. The removal of the requirement(s) would open the proverbial "floodgates" and further swamp an already severely saturated market.

Are we forgetting data supplied last session by an Oregon State University professor suggesting Oregon produces 3 times as much cannabis as it consumes? Do we strive to make that 10 times with this horrible bill?

In reality we all know that removing residency requirements for both medical and retail programs is a political favor for those interests who illegally positioned themselves to gain market share at the expense of others. The players in this game are rotten to the core.

HB 4014 would help ensure that the new cannabis industry collapses sooner than later while a few special interests who are able to afford unscrupulous lobbyists succeed in their get rich quick schemes. This is wrong and flies in the face of public opinion as was clearly expressed during the OLCC listening tours last year.

Claims that the industry is somehow stifled by lack of investment opportunity or that residency requirements somehow affects women and the disadvantaged is gravely dishonest and misleading. It is shameful for anyone to make such distorted claims in order to justify their true agenda.

Do we want to cover all of Oregon's farm land in glass/plastic (or metal) with barbed wire fences and security cameras? You can bet the farm that this will happen as a nationwide gold rush mentality takes hold and an uncontrollable influx of wanna-be pot farmers move to Oregon with the help of outside investors willing to cash in at any cost.

Is the Oregon we want our children to inherit?

Please remove the deceptive change in residency requirements from the HB 4014 and give M91 a chance to work for Oregonians.