

April 25, 2017

To: The Honorable Ginny Burdick and Ann Lininger, Members of the Committee.

From: Chelsea Hopkins, owner
The Greener Side

For the record my name is Chelsea Hopkins and I am the founding partner of The Greener Side retail cannabis store located in Eugene Oregon. We were one of the first OHA dispensaries in Oregon and have now become an OLCC licensee.

We support HB 2198.

HB 2198 establishes a new future for the OMMP. This gives hope to patients. OMMP has provided relief for thousands of patients over the nearly two decade history of the program and this bill gives it back its future.

As one of the first dispensaries licensed in Oregon I can tell you medical cannabis patients are no different than other Oregonians suffering from conditions and searching to find relief. They need hope, they need a future. Making sure the medical program has a future is good news for patients that are in it now and for those that will need it in the future.

HB 2198 will place the OMMP under new leadership. New leadership will be required to evaluate the program and how it can better serve its patients and the caregivers and growers that support them and report back to the legislature on these issues.

Reporting back to the legislature, also a part of this bill has been needed for a long time. It is the key to holding programs and agencies accountable for shortfalls or praised for its successes. Reports on the status of access for patients including costs and availability of medical grade products, the effectiveness of the strains and products available for mitigating symptoms and keeping issues like the low-income patient program in the discussion are important for a program that the rest of the country looks to for guidance.

In a time when studies are beginning to show overdose rates reduced in states with medical programs or that Medicare costs are coming down in those same states, it is important that the OMMP play a role in shaping policy to reflect these findings.

I would also like to comment on the tracking proposed in HB 2198. It makes sense to have a single system for everyone for reporting and tracking but without access to the adult use market it seems like a lot of work for OMMP growers whose market is quickly disappearing. As an OHA dispensary we depended on the smaller growers and their products. As OLCC retail licensees we no longer have access to these growers. We think HB 2198 offers a smart way to solve a very large problem.

Allowing OMMP growers to enter limited amounts of product per year into the adult use market will make these unique products available to us again. Having this excess come into the market through the wholesalers and processors is appropriate and will protect retailers from the extra work of intake and processing. It also takes a lot of cannabis out of the unregulated markets and that is good for everyone.

We support HB 2198 as amended by the -7's and urge the committee's support.

