

Date: 3/11/2019

To: The Honorable Chair Representative Lively, Vice Chair Representative Bonham, Vice-Chair Fahey and Members of the House Economic Development Committee

From: Aaron Mink-Small Farmer-The Cannabis Farm

RE: Position statement on HB 2233 related to social consumption

Chair Representative Lively, Vice Chair Representative Bonham, Vice-Chair Fahey and Members of the House Economic Development Committee:

My name is Aaron Mink. Along with my wife Mariah, we own The Cannabis Farm and Twisted Madrone Ranch. Both are small farms located on adjoining tax lots located in the Applegate Valley. The Cannabis Farm is a Tier 2 production site for Cannabis. While Twisted Madrone Ranch is more of a conventional farm, where we raise grass fed beef, poultry, and pastured pork. I've been a farmer most of my life. My parents still run the family cattle ranch in western Idaho and eastern Oregon.

We need to have social consumption laws for many reasons.

First of all it would increase sales of Cannabis for dispensaries. Offering the option of lounges, where customers can consume Cannabis will create a unique environment where like minded people can congregate and consume a product that voters of Oregon have deemed socially acceptable. Whether it's in a location that sells Cannabis products or at a event where a permit is obtained, having a consumption area will do nothing but boost sales and increase tourism.

Although my business wouldn't benefit from this bill right away, I believe it will open the door for small farmers such as ourselves to sell directly to consumers and offer tasting rooms and direct farm to consumer sales.

My farm is located on one Oregon's many booming wine trails. While our grape growing neighbours are able to offer farm tours and tastings, we are not. Offering this type of service is a dream of ours and we know that if and when we are able to emulate a vineyards business model it will greatly help our farm succeed.

Our society has great appreciation for our small farmers. During the last 10 years we've been able to see a shift on how we buy our food. We want to know it was grown to certain standards, and if possible we want these products produced by farmers who are conscience of the land and who practice sustainable techniques. A majority of the Cannabis farmers here in Oregon are small family owned farms who practice sustainable farming and who take pride in our communities. It is my hope that this body realizes the great resource that we, the Cannabis farmers of Oregon, are to this state. Personally I take great pride knowing that the product that my farm produces has raised over 2.5 million dollars of taxes, collected at the point of sale, since we've been licensed. 2.5 million dollars of tax revenue, let

that sink in. What other industry do we have that's comparable to this one? Where we have a profession that's based around agriculture that also has the ability to generate billions of tax dollars for our state? Now also, what other industry is scrutinized and treated as poorly as we are? Some people might laugh at the last phrase, "Treated as bad as we are". Let me give you a little context of what I mean: there's another bill in legislation this year asking Cannabis farmers to pay \$1 per square foot of canopy farmed to counties. \$1 per square foot would cost my small farm \$40,000. I'm not going to get into the lunacy of this bill, because it's not the bill I'm speaking about, but it does have validity in this conversation. Most small farms have safety nets in place through things like subsidies, or ag loans. If I wasn't growing Cannabis and I saw infrastructure improvement that we could do that would save us money or possibly boost production I would be able to go get a low interest loan from a bank. As of now, I can't even get a checking out without paying at least \$12,000 per year.

The reason I bring this up is because it is my hope that we are someday looked upon as a valuable resource to this state. For that to happen we need legislation passed that helps us succeed, and this bill will in fact help us succeed. It's not ideal, and it's not going to be the last time I come and plead my case as a small farmer, but it's a start. I urge you to support the passage of HB 2233. Please, let us continue to grow the Cannabis industry here in Oregon.

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