

March 10, 2021

Dear Chair Bynum and the Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony. My name is Suzanne DeCayette and I am the General Manager of Green Valley Wellness Dispensary in Talent, Oregon 97540. Green Valley Wellness was the first Medical Dispensary established in Talent in 2014. In 2015 the company earned its recreational license. Under my watch, from 2015 to present, Green Valley Wellness has served the Rogue Valley as an award-winning cannabis retailer and educational resource.

As a minority entrepreneur and former educator, I hold a personal stake in the success of HB3112. Only through supportive legislature and education can we combat institutional racism and bring justice to those who have suffered unfairly for cannabis offense convictions. Moreover, the success of HB3112 provides the opportunity to level the playing field for those currently working in, or endeavoring to enter, the cannabis industry through community investment, and the redirection of existing funds to assuage educational and health inequities.

I ask for your support of HB3112 because, sadly, institutional racism is woven into the fabric of our country. A 2020 analysis conducted by the American Civil Liberties Union stated that, "Black people are 3.64 times more likely than white people to be arrested for marijuana possession, not withstanding comparable usage rates." (*American Civil Liberties Union, A Tale of Two Countries: racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform, 2020*). The article further revealed that in some states Black people were nearly ten times more likely to be arrested. The numbers are heartbreaking, but of equal importance is the devastation that this type of racism leaves within a community. Families are broken, individuals are left wanting for employment after a cannabis conviction, and communities cannot thrive when they are unfairly targeted. HB3112 seeks to assuage these inequities by investing existing cannabis tax dollars into minority owned businesses, as well as utilizing tax dollars to support expungement of unjust cannabis convictions. As a black woman who has witnessed the inequities of our current legal system, where cannabis is concerned, the support and passage of HB3112 is of great importance.

HB3112 provides the cannabis industry with the unique opportunity to "level the playing field," so that **all** can partake in the fruits of this burgeoning industry. This is accomplished through the measure's provision for an Equity License, administering funding support to minority business owners. I am grateful for the opportunity to work in the cannabis industry and take pride in my role of leadership. However, I run a business that is not black-owned. I am the only person of color employed, and

in a position of upper management, within this business. Over the past six years, I have witnessed incremental growth for minority-owned businesses and a more exponential growth for non-minority owned businesses. Your support of HB3112 could provide someone like me with the opportunity to move from running a very successful cannabis business for someone else, to owning a very successful cannabis business, thus providing greater opportunities for diverse employment, as well as building and supporting minority communities.

Education is the foundation of a democratic society. HB3112 seeks to utilize existing state school fund cannabis and Oregon Health Authority tax dollars to redress inequities in education and health within minority communities. Directing funds in this manner supports the education and health of those marginalized by society. It further provides for the introduction of productive members of society who are able to make informed life choices. Utilizing cannabis tax dollars for education and wellbeing also opens the way for informed discussions on the medicinal uses of cannabis as well as drug use and abuse. We cannot expect a brighter future, if we are not willing to invest in those who are the future. The support and passage of HB3112 is an investment not only in the cannabis community, but an investment in the community we share as humans. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Suzanne DeCayette
General Manager
Green Valley Wellness LLC
Talent, OR. 97540