Bill No.: SB-1138  
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY RESTORATION FUNDS.  
Vote Date: 5/1/2019  
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute  
PH Date: 4/29/2019  
File No.: 928

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
To implement certain community restoration and revitalization efforts through community development corporations, community development credit unions and community impact zones, using tax revenue from the sale of cannabis and cannabis products and deposits in lieu of taxes.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Treasurer Shawn Wooden- State of Connecticut
Treasurer Wooden expressed concern that this bill places new responsibilities on the Treasurer, and implements an oversight council on which the Treasurer would have to serve as the Chair. SB 1138 also creates an investment advisory role for the Treasury while adding a new yearly reporting requirement, which would require additional staff and resources.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Mayor Luke Bronin- City of Hartford
Mayor Bronin thanked Sen. Fonfara and Rep. Rojas for crafting a detailed and carefully constructed bill that would direct the revenue generated from adult-use marijuana taxes to areas most in need of those funds, including Hartford. He notes that SB 1138’s community development corporations would invest in communities with high rates of distress, based on factors such as poverty, violence, and unemployment. It would provide resources needed to
help lift families out of poverty, including low- and no-cost early education, social impact bonds for elementary and middle schools that are the most underfunded, and — depending on how much funding is left over per city — other resources to promote home ownership, adult literacy, and create pipelines to jobs. The Mayor believes that Connecticut’s goal should be legalization that repairs the damage done by decades of racially disproportionate drug enforcement. He urges the committee to advance SB 1138, which would put equity at the center of marijuana legalization. It is long past time for us to replace the failed and destructive “war on drugs” with an equitable, thoughtful system of regulation.

**Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council**
We have limited our public testimony to issues that pertain to the medical marijuana program. However, section 6 and section 7 of the bill outline proposed taxes on cannabis products in an adult use program, and we would like to offer our thoughts on this. Section 6 would impose a $35/ounce tax on cannabis flower at the cultivator (wholesale) level as well as a $13.50/ounce tax on cannabis trim. Assuming a current wholesale price of $125/ounce for flower, this would amount to a 28 percent tax. However, if the price ultimately drops in half to $62/ounce, it would constitute a 56 percent wholesale tax rate. The result is the legal cannabis product would be much more expensive than what is available on the black market. CMCC would suggest the committee consider a simple flat-rate percentage surcharge on the price applied at the retail level, so consumers will know precisely how much the taxes are. A wholesale tax, as proposed here, would simply be folded into the final price at the retail stores, but consumers won’t see that. We believe transparency is important. Finally, we would encourage the committee to add language that expressly states the taxes and surcharges do not apply to the medical marijuana program. Individuals who qualify for that program have debilitating medical conditions. Many are low-income and need this medicine. Taxing that product will simply raise the final cost and could cause participants to seek out the cheaper black market product or stop using this medicine altogether.

**Bishop Robert L. Middleton-Pastor of New Beginnings Ministry in Hamden, CT**
Bishop Middleton submitted testimony in support for passing the bill to legalize adult recreational use of marijuana in CT. While I have personal reservations regarding the use of recreational marijuana, I’m not unrealistic to the inevitability of its legalization in this state as well as others and with that in mind my concern is that black and brown people are included in the process. I ask that in the spirit of fairness and equity that those who have been most adversely affected by the (current) laws and prosecution for the use/distribution of marijuana, are afforded the opportunity to partake in the benefits of its’ legalization. This is an urgent matter and if there was ever a time to right the many historical and systemic wrongs against us as a people, Connecticut can be a forerunner in this process.

**Marijuana Policy Project**
Submitted testimony in favor of SB 1138 for the following reasons:

I. SB 1138 would establish a reasonable tax structure that ensures steady revenue over time.

II. Once the market is mature, Connecticut can expect roughly $170 million in state cannabis tax revenues and $22 million in local tax revenue annually.

III. SB 1138 appropriately allocates cannabis tax revenue to distressed communities, early literacy in areas that most need it, and localities that host cannabis retailers.

IV. It is time for Connecticut to replace marijuana prohibition with thoughtful regulation.
HTG Supply of Orange Connecticut, Rhode Island Hydroponics, Inc., The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, Hawthorne Gardening Company

We write to you today to request your support for the end of marijuana prohibition in the state and the creation of a fair and legal marketplace to create tax revenue, jobs and economic activity in Connecticut. Our businesses manufacture, distribute, and sell equipment and supplies that can be used in the cultivation and production of plants. This equipment can also be used for indoor, greenhouse, or outdoor production of marijuana for professional and at home growers. Legalizing cannabis would increase our sales and allow us to expand our businesses to new locations, create new jobs and provide an economic boost to local communities. We feel that legalization would bring millions of dollars in additional sales of taxable growing equipment and supplies.

Nina Bernick
Ms. Bernick expressed wholehearted support for SB 1138, which would use funds from cannabis sales to promote development in economically distressed and underserved areas. It is not enough for Connecticut to simply legalize cannabis—we must legalize with a focus on repairing the wrongs caused by the war on drugs that has raged over the past fifty years. As long as Americans have used drugs, drugs have been used to marginalize the poor and people of color. They have provided a way for law enforcement to criminalize being black or brown, as we can clearly see in the astronomical rates at which people of color are incarcerated for drug offenses versus whites, despite similar rates of use. Improved education has been shown to reduce drug use, and providing economic opportunities to communities allows them to grow instead of stagnate in the poverty partially inflicted by the war on drugs.

Brian Herrington-Director of Government Affairs, Hawthorne Gardening Company
Mr. Herrington applauds the committee for taking the time to learn more about this issue and how Connecticut can install major criminal justice reform while creating new revenue. We hope Connecticut will support regulation of marijuana that also spurs economic growth for ancillary businesses as well. As an American company with over 150 years of business experience, we have many unique insights about this emerging industry and would be happy to share those perspectives as the Committee continues consider this legislation.

Jane Zhang
As a member of Yale Students for Sensible Drug Policy Ms. Zhang is writing in favor of Raised Bill Number 1138. While she firmly supports the legalization of recreational cannabis for many reasons, she believes that legalization must be done in a just fashion that begins to repair the damages caused by the war on drugs. This bill does exactly so by prioritizing reinvestment in public education, housing, and employment in the communities most affected by the war on drugs. Specifically, the proposed Community Development Corporations would provide a wide array of educational programs, services, and assistance across community impact zones. The establishment of the Community Development Credit Unions would offer further financial assistance for those of whom live in economically distressed neighborhoods. The Early Literary and Social Impact Funding would provide students reading below proficiency with the help they need and deserve, especially those living in community impact zones.
Jim Horan, Executive Director- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
LISC strongly supports the intent of R.B. 1138, which would invest tax revenue from cannabis sales into lower-income urban communities, and especially the most distressed neighborhoods. Having supported CDCs as the primary vehicle for LISC’s revitalization work, we recognize the value of CDCs in each community that would have sufficient resources to tackle important priorities to create opportunity. Mr. Horan also explained that at the same time, LISC has significant concerns about the legislation:

- LISC opposes the levy on nonprofits that maintain a pension fund, endowment, or other significant savings and colleges and hospitals. This would divert critical resources away from the clients nonprofits serve, and penalize them for developing savings. At the same time, some colleges and hospitals support CDCs, and some support homeownership, employment, and public education programs. It would be better to incentivize these “anchor institutions” to do more for the community, rather than impose significant fees in lieu of taxes.
- LISC is also concerned that the priorities for the CDCs in Section 1 of R.B. 1138 are too proscriptive, and do not provide CDCs or local residents sufficient flexibility to reflect local needs, such as public safety or re-entry (not listed), or employment as a top priority (it is sixth). Section (c)(2) says that CDCs must achieve a “high level of quality” for each strategy listed before taking on the next. CDCs generally do not focus on the top priorities listed in R.B. 1138, while other nonprofits do.

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Submitted testimony requesting that the committee include language to enable the State and Tribes to enter into agreements concerning the regulation, production and sale of cannabis by Indian Tribes in CT. They also suggest language that would enable agreements that would address cannabis-related issues including the preservation of public health and safety, the security of production, processing, retail, and research facilities, and cross-border commerce in cannabis.

Kebra Smith- CEO/Founder of CannaHealth
Ratasha Amith- President- Urban League of Young Professionals
With SB 1138, and the enactment of adult use Cannabis legislation in the State of CT, we have to opportunity, by way of the use of funds from Cannabis Tax Revenue, to right the wrongs of nearly a century of Prohibition. With 100% of the Cannabis Tax revenue going to the most DISTRESSED communities we can be a part of empowering communities to repair, rebuild themselves, through programs being proposed in this bill that will fund early literacy education and Community Development corporations that will focus on improving the lives of all people from our communities.

Brandon D. Pervis
Mr. Pervis believes that regardless of the source of their cannabis residents should feel safe under the law if they choose to consume marijuana. Throughout his testimony he cites the many negative side effects that have resulted from the ban on marijuana for recreational purposes in Connecticut. He points out that those side effects have particularly and unfairly affected minorities. He feels that providing education and safety regulations is key to making sure that the legalization of cannabis will be a positive step for the residents of Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:
Kim Harrison, VP-Government Affairs for Hartford Healthcare
This proposal would require non-profit hospitals to pay an annual fee to the state treasurer in an amount equal to 25% of the amount such hospital would have paid to the town in which the real property is located if such property were subject to the local property tax. This new fee, frankly a new tax, adds to an already significant tax burden for hospitals in this state. It has been a long held value in our nation that government will not tax activities that sustain the health and welfare of its people, and state governments across the nation, including Connecticut, have included not-for-profit hospitals among this group of charitable providers. This proposal begins to erode long standing tax code and statutory protections and heads us down the path of taxing non-profit hospitals.

Abu V. Edwards-Director of State Affairs, Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)
Luke D. Niforatos Chief of Staff & Sr. Policy Advisor, Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)
Melissa Robbins-State Director Smart Approaches to Marijuana
Senate Bill 1138 is bad policy and should be opposed. A study SAM undertook in Connecticut found that the costs associated with marijuana legalization would total $216 million, compared to an estimated $113.6 million in projected tax revenue. In other words, marijuana’s costs exceed the revenue by over 90%. This reflects the recent findings of a 92-page study conducted by the Centennial Institute in Colorado that found Colorado’s government pays $4.50 for every $1 in marijuana tax revenue. The bill also presents major public health and safety problems for Connecticut and will result in many other negative consequences.

Anne Diamond- President and CEO of Day Kimball Healthcare
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center
The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA)
Roberta Cook-President and CEO of BHcare
Pat McCabe-Yale New Haven Health
Lynn Ricci- President and CEO, Hospital for Special Care
Luis B. Pérez, President and CEO, Mental Health CT
Stuart Rosenberg- President, Johnson Memorial Hospital
Kathleen Silard, President & CEO, Stamford Health
ST. Vincent’s Medical Center
The above all testified that if passed this bill would require a not-for-profit hospital to pay an annual fee to the state treasurer in an amount equal to 25% of the sum such hospital would have paid to the municipalities in which the real property is located, if such property were subject to the local property tax, to fund community restoration and revitalization activities. We object to this proposal as a thinly disguised effort to impose a hybrid form of property tax on not-for-profit acute care, chronic disease, children’s, and psychiatric hospitals and health systems. We believe that Connecticut citizens are already well-served by a system through which hospitals and their community partners identify and address the medical, behavioral health, and social service needs that are unique to each community.

Samuel Gold- RiverCOG
Connecticut Forest and Park Association
Chelsea Gazillo- Working Lands Alliance
John Barnowski-Colchester Land Trust
Ann Astarita- Roxbury Land Trust
Amanda Branson- Naromi Land Trust
Steven M. Craig- The Harwinton Land Trust
Harry Day- President Stamford Land Trust
Jeanne Dube, John Erbland- East Granby Land Trust
Jim Febborriello- Heritage Land Preservation Trust
Ann Galliher- Old Lyme Land Trust
David Grigsby- Guilford Land Conservation Trust
Victor Herson- Wintonbury Land Trust
Richard Heys- Litchfield Land Trust
Jon Jensen, Earl Skokan- Heritage Land Preservation Trust
Christopher Keevil- Woodbridge Land Trust
Dennis Kern- Berlin Land Trust
Robert Lesniewski- Harwinton Land Trust
Rebecca Neary- Warren Land Trust
John Pietrafesa- Heritage Land Preservation Trust
Sarah Shrewsbury- Guilford Land Conservation Trust
Roberta Stafford- Warren Land Trust
John Stone- Stamford Land Conservation Trust
Thomas Tella- Wolcott Land Preservation Trust
John Triana- Prospect Land Trust
John Watson, Peter Raymond- Branford Land Trust
Catherine Rawson-Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, Inc.
Kristina White- Lyme Land Conservation Trust
Cynthia Anger- Woodbridge Land Trust
David Bingham- CT Land Conservation Coalition Advisory
Christopher Cheney-Branford Land Trust
William Coleman- Steep Rock Association
Chris Craig- Goshen Land Trust
Greg Decker- President-Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve
Bob Eckenrode-President Newtown Forest Association
Kirsten Feldman Chair, Steep Rock Association
Audrey Meyer- Trustee of Steep Rock Association
Joseph J Hanggi Jr –Trustee, Steep Rock Association
Edward Kelleher- member of the board of The Newtown Forest Association, Inc
Ingrid Manning-Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust
Louis C. Memoli-Brookfield Open Space Legacy, Inc
Mike Miller, President, Sleeping Giant Park Association
Richard Newton-Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. – Treasurer
Thomas M. Rickart Steep Rock Association
Eugene Pinover- President, Steep Rock Association
Bryan Pines- President, Woodbridge Land Trust
Amy Paterson- Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council
C.O. “Guy” Peterson- Newtown Forest Association
Harvey Pessin- Director, Newtown Forest Association
David Robinson-Save The River- Save the Hills
John Santoleri-Steep Rock Association
Jodi Schwartz-Steep Rock Association
Beth Sullivan-Stonington Town Committee chair, Avalonia Land Conservancy
David Sutherland – Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy
Suzanne Thompson Chairman, Connecticut River Gateway Commission
Leslie Warner- Steep Rock Association

The above all testified in opposition to this proposal which would divert critical resources from land trusts ability to acquire and manage open spaces and other natural resources that benefit our quality of life and local economy. It would penalize land trusts for their efforts to set aside funds to help secure their organization's long-term viability and to care for their land trust's properties and easements in perpetuity pursuant to best management practices (The Land Trust Standards & Practices). This proposal would also undermine relationships with donors who want their donations to support land conservation and not a state tax. The proposal would add a financial burden on our organizations, threatening our ability to care for land entrusted to us for the benefit of future generations. It would also add to the recordkeeping burden of our volunteers, who give so much of their time already.

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)
CCM opposes language in Section 5 of the proposal noting that the taxation of municipal property would impose an unfunded mandate on towns and cities and remove significant amounts of local revenue from their control. While having no developed stance on the legalization of recreational marijuana, CCM states that if legalization is adopted, then legislation should maintain local zoning authority and provides some reimbursement to municipalities who allow for a retail cannabis facility. It is noted that given these stipulations CCM would support language that imposes a local sales tax on cannabis and cannabis related products. Those taxes should be collected by DRS and dispersed to municipalities based on the area of sale, and allow that municipality to decide the use of that revenue that best suits their interests.

Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges- Jen Widness
Our 15 member institutions all contribute immensely to their local communities in a wide variety of forms. These schools open their athletic fields, museums, performances, meeting rooms, auditoriums and lecture halls to town residents. Their students and faculty volunteer in local organizations by the thousands, have developed partnerships with K-12 schools and provide a multitude of social resources that add to the vibrancy and vitality of the communities that surround them. Requiring nonprofit colleges and universities to pay fees to the state Treasurer that then would be sent to local credit unions would divert scarce resources from education, financial aid, and research and result in tuition increases and a decrease in community programs our member institutions provide, many of which local citizens rely on regularly. Non-profit colleges and universities are and will continue to be strong community partners. The millions of institutional dollars that these bills mandate be diverted elsewhere, to be spent in ways that do not capitalize on the assets and resources the campus community brings to the table, will only diminish our capacity to be strong partners in the future; not enhance it. Further, the fees would detract from independent higher education, one of the truly great assets of Connecticut, at a time when the state urgently needs excellent and affordable colleges and universities to meet the needs of employers.

Marek Kukulka, CEO Catholic Charities Inc.- Archdiocese of Hartford
Gian-Carl Casa, President & CEO, of the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance
Housatonic Valley Association, Inc. (HVA)
Karla Fortunato-President Connecticut Council for Philanthropy
Stan Soby, Vice President, Public Policy and External Affairs, Oak Hill
Kathleen Alemany
Elise Arseneau
Kristie Balisciano
Cynthia Bannon
Wendy Barnes
Donna Bartolf
John Bates
Jessica Beaulieu
Stacy Benson
Mark Berardi
Maureen O’Neill Biggs
Lynn Bishop
Allison Blake, CEO Child and Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut
Renee Bragg
Colleen Brothers
Kennies Brown
Jean Brunt
Tina Burne
Amanda Burgess
Annette Burton
Waldemar and Laurie Burzynski
Frances Button
Tracy Cafasso
Jaime Calo
Pamela Campbell
Eileen Canny
Elaine Carroll
Donna Catania
Laura Clark
Jill Conway
Marielle Daddona
John Decker
Jordan DeMaida
Timothy Douglas
John Engel
Catherine Ericksen
Elena Fader
Lois Fortin
Samantha Fowler
Tracey-Ann George
Steven Girelli
Emily Granelli
Stacey Hofmann
Jeffrey Greenblatt
Amy Guay-Macfarlane
Matthew Guzzetti
Nicole Hall
Monique HallMensah
Jodi Hancock
Jayson & Jennifer Hanelius
Elizabeth Harris-Pertillar
Lauren Horvath
Julie Hulten
Caroline Humphrey
Paul Jessell
Kenney Johnson
Patrick Johnson
Garfield Jones
Rebecca Jordan
Carolee Kalita
Celina Kuemper
Marijke Kehrhahn
Jessica Kolinsky
Adam Kosakowski
Dr. Mark Kraus
Kathy Kukowski
Joan Langer
Christine Leiby
Frances Lepore
Ketcria Leslie
Susan Loos
Andrew Lubin
Kathleen Luetjen
Jim McAllister
Sharon McLean
Diane McGeever
Lisa McCoy
Joan McFarlane
Diana Mennone
Eloise Mongillo
Danielle Morfi
Debra Morrisroe
Mary Jane Morrissey
John Neagle
David Nelson
Gary J. Nielsen
Alan Nolan
Susan Oster
Carol Pacitto
Deborah Monahan- Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.
Mag Morelli, President of LeadingAge Connecticut
Nichelle A. Mullins, Esq. President & Chief Executive Officer- Charter Oak Health Center
National Audubon Society
Jennifer Pisano
Joseph Piscitelli
James Power
Sandra Pue
Nina Rice
Joseph Sabolesky
Maureen Sand
Darian Sanders
Vincent Santilli
David Schiavo
Rick Sebastian
Loraine Shea
Michele Sitler
Paulette Sveum
Brittany Strums
Robert Teittinen
Doug Teeson, Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.
The Kennedy Center, Inc.
Sean W. Thomas
David Tompkins
Dew Torres
John Torres
Anita Ustjanauskas
Wayne Wamser
Jay Williams- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Patricia Wilcox
Shanna York
Ana Wittig
Helene Wojtowicz
Joanne Zukowski
Douglas Duford
Nicole Hall
Sandra Laskowski
Elizabeth Scanlon
Jim Zoldy-President, Halsey Associates, Incorporated
Catherine Zeiner- YWCA Hartford Region
Steven Zuckerman, President & CEO Root Center for Advanced Recovery

The above testified in fervent opposition to Section 5 of SB 1138 which directly threaten the charitable purposes and public benefits provided by every tax-exempt nonstock corporation in Connecticut holding tax exempt property directly related to their charitable purposes and having raised private charitable contributions to maintain their facilities and programs. This bill contains taxes on tax exempt funds that have prudently invested in endowments that allow them to hire staff, provide services, maintain facilities and ensure that their organizations are durable and well-run and remain reliable partners and vital resources. Taxing these funds forces non-profits to live hand-to-mouth and condemns the non-profit sector to a more precarious, less impactful existence. Section 5 of SB1138 compromise their charitable purposes and diminish the numerous public benefits they will be able to provide and for which they are granted tax-exempt status in acknowledgement of the value of those benefits to society. Any tax a nonprofit is required to pay means fewer people will be served. Nonprofits provide services so government does not have to. Paying a tax to government takes away their ability to serve more people. This policy does not make sense, especially at a time when nonprofits are experiencing an increasing demand for services.
Jennifer Anthony-Bogue
Ms. Bogue offered testimony related to the “marijuana portion of the proposal.” She feels that Rather than “demonizing” marijuana or suggesting that its use can be completely eradicated, the point she would like to add to the discussion is this: with no laws in place to hold those irresponsible users accountable, families may suffer the pain of seeing an impaired driver walk away to live a life unchanged by the choice he/she made. Only seven states have set legal guidelines which determine how much THC in the blood makes one dangerous behind the wheel. Studies are underway now to attempt to determine levels of impairment and how long that impairment lasts. A California company is developing a device which can accurately detect whether a person has smoked marijuana within the last two hours. Can we delay moving from decriminalization to legalization until this work provides us with the means to keep our roads safe?

Nathan Tinker- CEO Connecticut Pharmacists Association and Academy of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries
Mr. Tinker expressed concern that SB 1138 will have a lasting negative impact on the medical cannabis program. As currently written, the bill proposes a taxation system on potential cannabis retail sales (Sections 6-8), but does not explicitly exempt medical marijuana dispensaries, cultivators, or patients from this taxation scheme. Indeed, if an adult-use cannabis program becomes law, it is possible that medical dispensaries may also sell retail cannabis in the same establishment—medical marijuana should be explicitly carved out of the cannabis taxation program in order to assure that the product is clearly demarcated from recreational product. Further, we are concerned that all the tax dollars collected by the program are to be deposited to a new Community Development Corporation Trust Fund. What this means is that none of those monies will be applied to DCP enforcement or other regulatory oversight of the adult-use cannabis industry. Diverting the totality of these funds to non-regulatory, non-oversight programs means that DCP will not have the resources or leverage to adequately and fairly supervise the recreational program, thus further undermining the operational oversight of the medical marijuana program.

Andrew Davidson
Tiffany Davidson
Paul Echtenkamp
Karen Fischer
Cathy Hazlett
William Huhn
James Izzo
Susan Klein
Denese Marshall
Martha Parizot
Karolin Regan
Paul Reinhardt
Craig Turner- Town of Wallingford Youth and Social Services
Strongly supports revitalizing our most at-risk communities. The bill ignores the costs and risks (Economic, health, crime, etc.) to the very individuals that it seeks to help. The above
urge this committee and others to consider the burdens that you are placing on the citizens of Connecticut and the risk to the very communities that you seek to help.

**University of New Haven**

If enacted, the University of New Haven would be adversely and seriously impacted. A fee such as one proposed would prevent the University of New Haven from fulfilling its core mission to educate students. We would be forced to pass on this expense to our students and their families, putting further pressure on their ability to pay for a college education. The University of New Haven is a proud community partner. We are the Town of West Haven’s largest private employer with more than 770 full-time employees. Our annual economic impact is estimated at $1.4 billion. Our students, faculty and staff are active members in the local community, working collaboratively with municipal leaders and community groups in West Haven and the surrounding region. These partnerships are providing immeasurable social, aesthetic and economic benefits, which will be diminished greatly if the University is forced to redirect resources to comply with this proposal.

**Reported by:** Jean Holloway  
**Date:** May 14, 2019