The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut’s statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 100% of Connecticut’s population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

SB 16 "An Act Concerning The Adult Use Of Cannabis"

SB 16 would legalize the cultivation, manufacture, sale, possession, and use of cannabis in Connecticut. The proposed legislation would allow possession of cannabis and cannabis products for consumers over twenty-one years of age or older. The bill would limit consumer possession to one and one-half ounces of cannabis, of which no more than five grams may be in the form of a cannabis concentrate.

CCM’s members are united in that any proposal that would legalize marijuana should be based on science and we urge the committee to seriously examine the health effects and public safety concerns before passing any legislation. CCM has been adamant that a municipality be afforded the ability to prohibit or restrict in any manner the operation of a cannabis establishment, as well considerations need to be made regarding the public safety concerns of legalizing the recreational use of cannabis and the treatment of substance abuse.

While CCM is appreciative that SB 16 does address some of those issues by:

- Allowing a municipality through its zoning regulations or local ordinances to prohibit the establishment of a cannabis establishment, except for a dispensary facility or producer.

- Allowing municipalities to establish reasonable restrictions regarding the hours and signage within the limits of such municipality.

- Requiring the chief zoning official of each municipality to inform the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management in writing, on or before January 1, 2022, as to whether a municipality prohibits or restricts cannabis establishments based on zoning or municipal ordinance.

- Reworking impaired driving procedures with an emphasis on training for drug recognition.

- Establishing a 3% tax on the gross receipts from the sale of cannabis and cannabis products by a cannabis retailer which is paid to the tax collector and deposited in the general fund of the municipality.

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It must be noted however, that Connecticut towns and cities that opt to have cannabis in their communities will have to enforce new regulations and ensure public safety. Some of these concerns and issues were raised at CCM’s 2019 Annual Convention where we hosted municipal representatives from Colorado and Massachusetts to share the municipal perspective regarding the legalization of marijuana in those States. The presentation raised several considerations that need to be contemplated before Connecticut legalizes marijuana. To view the CT-N coverage, please click on the link: CCM Panel Discussion on the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana.

This panel highlighted the fact that the municipal role in the regulation and enforcement of legal marijuana is immense and resources need to be properly allocated in order to do it adequately. While we are appreciative that some of the municipal issues are contemplated in this proposal, we are concerned that others are left to the regulatory process and are not defined. In addition, how legal marijuana is treated in the workplace and public places are other areas that need attention.

CCM is willing to engage in dialogue over these concerns as the bill moves through the legislative process.

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If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Advocacy Manager of CCM at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or (203) 500-7556.