STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection

Judiciary Committee Testimony
March 2, 2020

Good afternoon Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am James Rovella, Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Senate Bill 16, Governor Lamont’s bill concerning the adult use of cannabis.

I would like to begin by saying that we fully support the Governor’s bill because it protects the public health and safety of our citizens. It is important to recognize that some form of cannabis is already legalized in states near or bordering Connecticut. Adult use has been fully legalized in three out of six New England states, and more are looking to do the same. This means cannabis is already among us and law enforcement is dealing with it and expending resources on it. With that being said, the fact that this bill fully supports law enforcement testing of impaired driving is one of the important reasons I support this legislation.

The legalization of adult use cannabis is a difficult topic that has been debated many years both here at the legislature and in public discourse. As with all pieces of legislation, additional discussions may be needed to enhance the current language, and I am committed to participating in continuing dialogue on the bill moving forward in the legislative session. I am convinced that if we all work together, we will have a piece of legislation that most of us can agree on.

Thank you and I am prepared to answer any questions that you may have.