

General Law Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5235

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION'S

Title: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CANNABIS REGULATION.

Vote Date: 3/7/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/27/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The need to redefine "marijuana", "manufactured cannabinoid" and "synthetic cannabinoid" and its regulation is needed. The bill would make synthetic cannabinoid a Schedule I controlled substance. Cannabis shall not contain synthetic cannabinoid and it cannot be sold in any establishment. It also specifies that hemp is a federally legal substance and could be transported and shipped through the state. Minor technical changes and conforming changes to the state statute also would be addressed.

Substitute Language

The substitute language will allow liquor stores to sell THC infused liquids such as seltzer with 2.5 mg per 12 ounce can. Liquor stores are qualified to sell the item as they currently sell adult beverages. They are trained and required to check identification to verify their customer is 21 years old. Hemp farmers will have the ability to team with local small growers of cannabis to produce products with a very low THC amount provided they are labeled, and the customer is aware. No synthetic cannabinoid will be allowed to be sold in the state.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection

Commissioner Cafferelli thanked the committee for raising this bill as requested by DCP.

This proposal specifically clarifies existing prohibitions on industry regulators from participating in the business of adult-use cannabis; it will prohibit potentially dangerous and untested hemp or cannabis products from being possessed or sold in the state. Clarification that transportation of lawfully produced hemp through the state of Connecticut is permitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jennifer Fell, Director of Business Development and Government Affairs Communication Lobbyist, Connecticut Cannabis Chamber of Commerce

The Connecticut Cannabis Chamber of Commerce is in support of this bill. This is a wisely crafted bill that is a crucial piece of legislation that furthers government practices and safety standards and effective development of the Connecticut cannabis industry. Sections 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 are comprehensive and forward thinking and this is a commendable step towards a well-regulated and equitable cannabis industry in Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council

CMCC at the outset would like to acknowledge the transparency and outreach by the Department of Consumer Protection conducted on this issue. They urge additional discussions on the issue that could include a working group to develop the best approach to the use of synthetic cannabinoids.

Jacob Honig, Co-Owner-Farmer-CFO-TheCBGGurus, LLC

Mr. Honig has several problems with this bill. He has proposed several changes that he feels would improve the proposed bill as written.

Deborah Locker, Farmer

Ms. Locker opposes this bill. She owns a small farm in Preston, has grown hemp and sells her own CBD wellness product for the last three years. These regulations cause her to lose business as her customers are going to other states to purchase CBD products. She may have to stop making CT formulated CBD and only sell and do shows in neighboring states. The state has said they want to help and support farmers, maybe you want my farm to become another housing project.

Duncan Markovich, Owner, Better Ways LLC

Mr. Markovich opposes this bill but did offer some minor suggestions to improve some of the language and requesting some clarity. He supports the committee's efforts to protect the youth from exposure to high THC products and does not support access from untrained, unsafe, untested products or any synthetic cannabis. He would like to know why CBN a sleep aide from a natural product should be considered a controlled substance. He also would like clarified the interpretation of hemp, why are animals not allowed to consume hemp and he does support clearer labeling requirements. Perhaps the goal on the allowable limits of mold and bacteria should be assessed again.

Josiah Schlee, Cannabis Advocate

Mr. Schlee does support banning Delta 8 and Synthetic THC Products but does not support any other part of this legislation. If the committee truly believes this is fair and equitable than anything containing alcohol currently being sold over the counter should be banned and only sold at a state regulated approved liquor retailer. If the issues being approved by the DCP are not remedied, the cannabis patients of the state will be forced to file a lawsuit against the DCP.

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Assistant Clerk

Date: 03/18/2024