

James M. Barrett
April 13th, 2015
Juneau, AK

Letter of Support to HB 123

Thank you for your time and hard work this session. There are a lot of unique challenges that Alaska faces at this time. Your efforts and determination on these matters are greatly appreciated by all Alaskans.

I am writing this letter to show my support for House Bill 123. I encourage the Legislature to move this bill forward for the following purposes:

1. The bill establishes a Marijuana Control Board(MCB). This is a very important factor when creating regulations for any market. It is in the best interest of all Alaskans that the Legislative body creates a separate MCB since the industry is inherently different from that of the Alcohol industry. Although one may argue that the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board is capable of creating such regulations, a separate board allows for a much stronger set of regulations.
2. Due to the time restraints to set regulations and size of the current Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, a separate MCB will have the ability to prioritise the regulation process better and meet the November 24th deadline for regulations to be established.
3. Sec. 2 AS 17.38.080 (b)(4): Industry representation on the Marijuana Control Board. Having an marijuana industry representative on the MCB is absolutely necessary and possible. There are currently many Alaskans throughout Alaska that are well qualified as industry representatives.
4. HB123 Allows the Legislature to aid and implement the will of the voters by creating a smart, strong, and able regulatory body. Strong legislation such as this bill is a reflection of the Legislature's ability to competently handle emerging issues such as the developing cannabis market. It also shows that the Legislature is responsible and actively engaging in a wide variety economic solutions to it's current financial shortfall.
5. HB123 adds a fiscal note that covers additional expenses that may not be sufficiently covered by the current proposed Alcoholic Beverage Control Board budget. By having a separate Marijuana Control Board, it would prevent the defunding of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board in effort to unnecessarily repeal 17.38. The Legislature has an obligation to ensure that the funds needed for implementation of the new law are available and sufficient. To have a strong marketplace from the start, a regulating board needs adequate funding for implementation and enforcement.
6. The fiscal note covers expenses needed to implement a **seed to sale tracking** program. These programs are very efficient and cost effective. They provide various industry ready ways to implement a tightly regulated market from the beginning. Fortunately, there are already several affordable and dependable tracking systems currently available. The attached fiscal note sufficiently covers these costs.

A qualified industry representative should be validated by having upon submission of a resume; letters of recommendation, pre-existing work in the medical marijuana community, shows active engagement with industry professionals as well as government officials, plans to actively participate in the marijuana marketplace, has knowledgeable experience on other public boards, and/or shows a strong understanding of government and cannabis law whether it be by work experience or volunteer positions.

Many well qualified Alaskans are already taking a similar role of board members on local levels. It would be in the best interest of the State of Alaska to seek out these individuals for input and industry representation in effort to form a more perfect board and smooth transition from a black market to a legitimate market.

Thank you again for your time and hard work. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have.

James M. Barrett
97-957-4751
Juneau, Alaska