

February 23, 2024

Written Testimony - Unfavorable HB0805 – Cannabis – Licensee Locations – Restrictions
(Cross-file SB0537)

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Susan McCutchen. I am speaking in opposition to SB0537 – Cannabis – Licensee Locations - Restrictions. I live in Bladensburg, one of the four Port Towns.

How much more can we importune environmental justice communities ravaged by highways to nowhere, pollution that causes health issues for residents, food deserts, and an overabundance of liquor stores, tobacco shops, and cheap retail? Why not pile on licensed cannabis dispensaries and certain licensed cannabis growers in those very same locations and add to the factors that consistently threaten our communities and our residents? How are we expected to thrive and improve our quality of life amidst liquor, tobacco, and marijuana businesses in lieu of economic development to establish quality grocery stores, community retail, restaurants, and recreational spaces for healthy living?

These state bills would strip zoning decisions for locations of marijuana dispensaries from our local and county officials and preclude input from residents. Communities deserve to be allowed in on the planning because we live here.

So often bills are submitted with the seemingly practical purpose of promoting positive sources of business income in communities. But these potentially money-making enterprises come with a human cost. Do you want to live and raise a family in a community trading heavily in liquor, tobacco, cannabis growing and dispensing, and cheap retail stores? Do you want these establishments next door to you and have them predominate your community? Instead of encouraging development of these enterprises in our communities, why not look to help us to a better way of life – and establish them on available set-aside county and state land where they can prosper just as well without discomfiting our residents and the livable communities we are trying to build.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony unfavorable to SB0537.

Sincerely,

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