



Wes Moore, Governor • Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor • Will Tilburg, Director

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3E Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 469– Maryland Cannabis Administration – Cannabis Licensing – Protests of Renewal – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Beidle,

The Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) is submitting this letter of support for Senate Bill 469 – Maryland Cannabis Administration – Cannabis Licensing – Protests of Renewal (SB0469), and respectfully requests a favorable committee report.

SB0469 establishes a process for residents and commercial tenants who are within 1,000 feet of a licensed cannabis business to protest the renewal of the cannabis license under certain circumstances. The provisions of the bill are consistent with the protest of renewal provisions governing retail alcoholic beverages licensees in the State. SB0469 would require the MCA to hold a public hearing to consider any substantive protests of renewal filed with the agency, and authorize the MCA to promulgate regulations to implement the statutory provisions.

The MCA believes that the provisions under SB0469 will provide an important mechanism for input and feedback on the community impact of licensed cannabis facilities. The bill will also help ensure that cannabis businesses are good neighbors and community members in the neighborhoods in which they are located, without placing significant additional burdens on the cannabis licensees or MCA. SB0469 also provides a role for local authorities to enforce provisions of local law, maintain a good quality of life for their residents, and protect the rights of other businesses in the area. Under the bill, only certain violations or citations may serve as the basis for a protest of renewal. Included in this list of violations or citations are those that may be issued by local officials.

There are approximately 100 licensed dispensaries currently operating in the State, with an additional 75 licenses subject to award in the coming weeks, and up to 300 total dispensaries authorized statewide under the Cannabis Reform Act of 2023 (Chapters 254/255 of the Acts of 2023). As the cannabis industry continues to grow in Maryland, the MCA is committed to ensuring that operators act in good faith and are good community partners. The MCA also believes there is an important role for the local communities to play in keeping the licensees, and the MCA itself accountable in maintaining a safe and responsible cannabis industry in the State.

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at (410) 487-8069 or william.tilburg@maryland.gov or Andrew Garrison, Chief of the Office of Policy and Government Affairs at (443) 844-6114 or andrew.garrison@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Tilburg". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Will Tilburg, JD, MPH
Director, Maryland Cannabis Administration

cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee