



City of New Bedford
MASSACHUSETTS

Office of City Council

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May 31, 2017

The Honorable Mark J. Cusack, House Chair
The Honorable Patricia D. Jehlen, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Marijuana Policy
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Cusack, Chair Jehlen, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing you to respectfully urge that you provide local government officials with the tools necessary to effectively manage the sale of recreational marijuana in our communities. As a recently elected New Bedford City Councillor, it is incumbent on me to listen to the concerns of my constituents and to act on their behalf. I represent Ward Three of New Bedford, home of the proposed first ever medical marijuana dispensary in the SouthCoast.

While many of my constituents have expressed concerns regarding the medicinal dispensary in and of itself, I am writing you in regard to the recreational marijuana law passed on November 8, 2016. According to the law, unless amended, medical marijuana dispensaries will now be able sell recreational marijuana without obtaining additional local approval. While I understand the need for access to medical marijuana, I do not believe that the right to access medicinal marijuana must be coupled with the loss of the right to regulate recreational marijuana. If a dispensary wants to sell recreational marijuana in our community, they should be required to obtain local approval first to do so.

Question 4 passed in the City of New Bedford, and it is the duty of Elected Officials to ensure that the will of the voters is executed in a responsible manner. That being said, the precincts with the most votes against recreational marijuana Ward 3 (D, E, F) will now be home to, or neighbors of what is likely to become a recreational marijuana facility – rather than simply a medical marijuana dispensary.

The history of our Commonwealth of Massachusetts is made of many municipal governments making policy decisions based upon local input – we should continue that tradition to provide opportunity for civic and community engagement on these important decisions. I respectfully encourage you to amend the law to require local approval when medical dispensaries seek to transition to recreational sale of marijuana.

Sincerely,

Hugh C. Dunn, Esq.
City Councillor Ward Three