



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
PO Box 15020
Washington, DC 20003



February, 24 2024

Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Legislation Establishing Moratorium Zones for Medical Cannabis

Dear Council Chair Mendelson:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on February 13, 2024, our Commission voted 5-0-0 (with 4 Commissioners required for a quorum) to support the request for legislation to revise to Chapter 16B of Title 7 of the Code of the District of Columbia to provide for moratorium zones for medical cannabis retailer licenses.

Based on a compelling public interest, DC statutes and municipal regulations allow for the establishment of moratorium zones for alcoholic beverage licenses. However, we noticed that no similar provisions exist for medical cannabis retailer licenses. This may have been an oversight when the Council established a framework to legalize the sale of cannabis licenses, and then made subsequent improvements to that initial framework. We appreciate the Council's work to date.

However, we remain concerned with the concentration of cannabis establishments within certain areas of the city. Take H Street NE as an example. For years illegal I-71 shops proliferated H Street, at one point numbering nearly 20 establishments along a 12-block stretch. Despite the efforts of ABCA and MPD to enforce DC laws, many still operate. At the same time, several establishments have applied for and received medical cannabis licenses. The concentration of cannabis establishments, legal and illegal, far exceed the national average. Nationally, there is one cannabis establishment for approximately each 23,000 persons; in zipcode 20002 these 20 establishments (legal or otherwise) equate to one cannabis retailer per 3400 residents. (Sources: Pew Research Center and U.S. Census Data.)

Our principal goal is to distribute these licenses across the city, rather than have them concentrated in a few areas of the city. To achieve this goal, we request the Council to consider and pass legislation to provide for moratorium zones for medical cannabis retailer licenses parallel to those in place for alcoholic beverage licenses, Title 25 of the Code of the District of Columbia. Doing so would provide citizens a methodology to request limits on concentrations. It would also benefit those legally compliant establishments by geographically distributing the competition.

We look forward to working with you to support, and if desired, draft, the appropriate language.

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on anc-6a@googlegroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, on Twitter (@ANC6A) and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.

Thank you for giving great weight to the recommendations of this Commission. Should you wish to discuss this letter with the Commission, please feel free to reach out to me at 6A05@anc.dc.gov

On behalf of the Commission,



Dave Wethington
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Honorable Brianne Nadeau, Ward 1 Councilmember
Honorable Brooke Pinto, Ward 2 Councilmember
Honorable Matthew Frumin, Ward 3 Councilmember,
Honorable Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4 Councilmember
Honorable Zachary Parker, Ward 5 Councilmember
Honorable Charles Allen, Ward 6 Councilmember
Honorable Vincent C. Gray, Ward 7 Councilmember
Honorable Trayon White, Sr., Ward 8 Councilmember
Honorable Kenyan McDuffie, Chair Pro Tempore of the Council of the District of Columbia
Honorable Anita Bonds, At-Large Councilmember
Honorable Christina Henderson, At-Large Councilmember
Honorable Robert White, At-Large Councilmember