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Elliot  
LD 1517

My name is Dana Brearley. I am a founder of East Coast Cannabis and a board member of CannabisME, a coalition of adult use cannabis company owner and operators.

I am here to testify in support of LD1517.

A diverse and inclusive cannabis market should be a priority for the state.

We appreciate the work that the Speaker of the House has done to make legal cannabis a more equitable marketplace.

However, legal cannabis is heavily regulated and taxed, making it a difficult market to enter into and, once you are licensed and operational, to run a viable business.

I and other stakeholders have been working with the Speaker on crafting legislation that helps qualified social equity applicants enter the market and support measures like an Ombudsman to help provide guidance to licensees, eliminating barriers to entry by, for example, waiving licensing fees, and creating incentives for existing licensees to mentor social equity applicants.

That said, a critical component to this is ensuring that there is a market where social equity applicants, once they have, with support from the state, entered that market can operate a viable business.

In particular, the current excise tax—a flat fee that is for flower 30% of the wholesale price and for trim almost 50% of the wholesale price—makes it almost impossible for any cultivator, let alone a small farmer, to survive.

While that is not addressed in LD1517, it is our understanding that the Speaker recognizes that creating an equitable cannabis market requires a holistic approach. I, as an adult use operator, and CannabisME support efforts to create a more diverse market and look forward to continuing to work with the Speaker, the legislators, and others on this.