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LD 40

Hello VLA Committee, Thanks for considering my testimony. My name is Keiley Gosselin and I'm a cultivator. I am in support of LD 40 and ask that you pass this legislation. For one, defining the legislative intent of the Office of Cannabis Policy through the proposed language in LD 40 is crucial for establishing a comprehensive and purpose-driven framework for the cannabis industry in the State. Acknowledging cannabis as a major economic contributor, the Legislature aims to cultivate a well-regulated industry that operates without the burden of stigma and outdated policies from the war on drugs. By prioritizing the survival and prosperity of small cannabis family farms and businesses, especially in rural areas, this legislative intent underscores a commitment to fostering economic and community development. This forward-looking approach not only aligns with the economic goals of the State but also strives to create a regulatory environment free from discriminatory practices. Next, making cannabis businesses jump through hoops to prove they're following laws from other agencies that are already on the books and enforceable by other agencies is unnecessary. OCP is supposed to handle cannabis stuff. Other agencies can enforce the things in their own jurisdiction. Let's keep things straightforward and let OCP focus on what it's meant to do – regulate cannabis. Furthermore, limiting audits to a maximum of twice within a six-month period for cannabis businesses is a sensible and fair approach that aligns with principles of reasonable oversight. This restriction acknowledges the need for regulatory scrutiny while preventing excessive auditing. By imposing such a restriction, the legislative framework not only fosters an environment of trust between regulatory authorities and cannabis businesses but also ensures that the audit process remains a tool for compliance without turning into an undue disruption. This provision promotes a balanced regulatory approach, allowing businesses to operate efficiently and contribute positively to the industry while still maintaining necessary checks and balances in a reasonable way. Finally, it's vital to ensure that law enforcement practices are applied fairly, just like in any other legal industry. The current practice of allowing law enforcement to enter a cannabis business without the owner's consent, a valid warrant, or a recognized exemption is deeply concerning. Not only does this violate basic principles of due process, but it also adds to the stigma surrounding our industry. It's essential to address this issue to create a level playing field for all businesses, build trust between law enforcement and cannabis businesses, and eliminate unfair biases. Advocating for equal treatment is key to establishing a more transparent and equitable regulatory framework for the cannabis sector. Thank you, and please pass LD 40.