

Oregon Representatives,

I am writing to OPPOSE HB 2233, which would allow marijuana consumption at temporary events and the creation of cannabis lounges.

Oregon, unlike most of Colorado, did not call for marijuana cultivation be located in industrial areas. HB 2233 would unfairly push most of the “cannabis lounges and events” into rural areas.

HB3400, which was passed without voter input, already subjects rural homeowners to the negative impacts of living next door to marijuana cultivators. Now, yet again without the input of those who will be the most impacted, the rural resident, you are proposing that any marijuana grow operator who can obtain a license from the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission, (OLCC) will have the right to hold tasting events and set up marijuana lounges on their properties.

The OLCC is currently woefully understaffed and openly admits to being unable to keep up with mandated marijuana inspections, adding yet another layer of responsibility to this agency would result in ZERO enforcement.

Oregon currently has one of the highest rates of DUIs in the country, allowing individuals to get high outside their homes will inevitably see a dramatic increase in these numbers in years to come. Furthermore, as most marijuana cultivators are in rural areas, HB 2233 would undoubtedly force more individuals to spend more time driving to and from such events/lounges. Thus, putting more traffic on our rural roads and subjecting rural residents to more drug impaired drivers.

How many more innocent victims in Oregon need to die unnecessarily because of the distracted, reckless, driving of those who are under the influence of drugs and alcohol?

Since Colorado legalized marijuana use it has seen a large uptick in traffic deaths. Let me present some highlights:

- 69 percent of marijuana users in Colorado admit to driving high. (Colorado DOT, April 2018)
- 55 percent of marijuana users in Colorado believe it is “safe to drive under the influence of marijuana” and have done so an average of 12 times in the last month. (*Summit Daily News*, Nov. 12, 2017)
- 57 percent of marijuana users in Colorado admit driving within two hours of smoking marijuana. (KDVR Fox 31, March 19, 2017)
- Drivers killed in crashes are more likely to be on drugs than alcohol. (Melanie Zanona, 2017 <https://thehill.com/policy/transportation/330648-drivers-in-fatal-crashes-more-likely-to-be-on-drugs-than-alcohol>)
- Traffic deaths increased dramatically after legalization of marijuana in Colorado. (Colorado DOT, 2017)
- Of drivers testing positive for substances, more than one-third tested positive for marijuana. (Colorado DOT, 2017)

■Use of marijuana in Colorado by those 12 years old and older is third in the nation and 85 percent higher than the national average. (Rocky Mountain HIDTA Report, September 2018)

■In looking at two three-year periods in Colorado – one period before legalization of marijuana and one period afterward – adult marijuana use increased 67 percent (and was 110 percent higher than the national average) and college-age marijuana use increased 18 percent (and was 60 percent higher than the national average). (Rocky Mountain HIDTA Report, September 2018)

Ironically, most rural voters did not vote for Measure 91, yet these homeowners were ultimately the ones who were forced to deal with the negative impacts of living next to marijuana cultivators. HB 2233 will now allow these same cultivators to hold “marijuana events” on their properties, with only a simple license requirement from an already understaffed OLCC.

HB 2233 Section 2, #3, states the following:

(c) The premises at which an applicant intends to operate a cannabis lounge may not be located:

**(A) In an area that is zoned exclusively for residential use;** or

(B) Within 1,000 feet of: (i) A public elementary or secondary school for which attendance is compulsory under ORS 339.020; or (ii) A private or parochial elementary or secondary school, teaching children as described in ORS 339.030 (1)(a).

So, it appears that HB 2233 seeks to protect urban residents at the expense of rural families. The question that should be asked is “why are rural homeowners’ children not afforded the same protection as those of urban residents?”

HB 2233 will subject rural residents and their children to “pot” events that will attract those looking to party. As such there will be loud music and bright lighting and the potential for drugged/drunken individuals to trespass onto neighboring properties. The large amounts of traffic coming and going from such events/lounges will create unacceptable noise levels in rural areas, destroying the very peace and quiet of these areas and the reason why most elect to live there in the first place. Like Colorado it will also inevitably result in more impaired drivers frequenting rural roads.

These events and lounges don’t belong in rural areas, they should be limited to urban downtown areas and if necessary collocated with existing marijuana dispensaries, away from **ALL** residential neighborhoods, not just urban ones.

Rural homeowners need to be afforded the same rights as urban residents, this includes the right to make decisions that will impact their homes and that of their families. HB 2233 is yet another bill that has been created to serve the “special interests” of the marijuana industry, it’s lobbyists and pro-pot politicians.

At the very least, HB 2233 needs to add the following language; “may not be located in rural areas.”

Thank you.

Paula Hawes

Oregon Resident