

Dear House Committee on General Government,

My name is Hanna Momtazi and I am writing this letter on behalf of my immediate family members and I. We have been Oregon residents since 1990 and over the years have built successful businesses in construction, agriculture and the beverage/tourism industries. We started Tecna Industries (truss manufacturing) in 1990 in Sandy, Oregon then moved our business to McMinnville in 1994. By 1997, we bought 496 acres (currently over 532 acres) where we call home to Momtazi Vineyard. Our third business, Maysara Winery was established in 2000 and since the inception of the winery and vineyard, we have done our part in making sure we farm and make our wines in the cleanest way possible. Being Demeter Certified Biodynamic, we do not use chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, insecticides or adding any yeast, enzymes and/or other additives. We want to ensure that we are not only taking care of our consumers but also our land, the creatures and plants like the blue lupine that reside on our estate.

For us, this bill hits home. In 2017, we learned that our new neighbor purchased a 6.7 acre property in an EFU 80 zone in hopes for a large Tier 2 marijuana grow and a large scale processing plant. Fast forward to today, we have been battling in both State and Federal lawsuits for over 4 years. It has consumed all our time and energy, money as well as ruined our reputation with people thinking we are just against marijuana and the smell. Headlines always write “wine vs weed” and because of that, we consistently receive death threats against our family and employees because media sources decided that click bait ratings were better than reporting the actual facts.

The facts are:

1. Our neighbor —without any of the proper permits from State Organizations such as ODA, DEQ etc.,— was able to move over 3 acres of soil which completely changed the contour of the land for his future greenhouses and construct two 80,000 gallon water tanks all while ignoring Oregon drainage laws. This has caused soil erosion on our family estate and has done damage severe to our waters, land and vines.
2. We have customers in fear of purchasing grapes grown near our neighbors property due to the potential for taint.
3. We are in danger of losing our certification due to chemical runoff into our streams and reservoir from the neighboring property (of which we hold the water rights) which will negatively effect our entire property and the holistic way we farm.
4. With the ways that conventional marijuana is grown and processed, there is significant potential of harm by hazardous airborne chemicals and nauseous fumes to neighboring homes and farming businesses in the surrounding area.
5. Safety and potential crime in rural areas is of great concern because:
 - In rural locations it takes longer for first responders to get onsite of an emergency
 - Lack of water support in the valley
 - Road conditions to restrict emergency vehicles
6. The damage we’ve experienced would have never happened if they were to grow and process in an industrial area.

When marijuana was on our ballot here in Oregon making it legal, many of us including my family thought laws and ordinances were going to be put into place. For example, ordinances such as where growing and processing operations would be allowed. That all counties would have guidelines of what they would need to follow in order for someone to be approved. And more importantly, the space to have proper electricity such as 3 phase electricity and distance to not cause any explosions or fires, especially in rural areas that take a lot longer for first responders to get to and thus increases the risks in these areas. Unfortunately, these rules and regulations were not put into place and has directly contributed to the damages our family and neighbors have experienced.

No one is saying take their weed away. No one is saying that they cannot grow or process. But what needs to happen is we, as residents and contributors to Oregon's economy, need to be protected against the lack of rules and regulations from ANY business that can endanger other peoples homes, businesses and livelihoods.

I hope this letter brings some first-hand insight to you as you cast your vote in passing this bill. These last 4 years have been hell for our family and the financial and emotional toll that the State and Federal lawsuits we’re enduring is something we hope doesn’t continue to happen to others. We 100% support this bill to require marijuana processing to be allowed only in industrial zones in order to mitigate the risks these industrial plants pose to farming communities.

Best Regards,
Hanna Momtazi