

Testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1548

Good Morning Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs, Members of the Committee—

My name is Anthony Taylor. I am the Legislative Director of Compassionate Oregon, an Oregon nonprofit corporation.

I appreciate the intent behind SB 1548 and the thoughtful discussion it has prompted and share concerns raised by industry and agency stakeholders, that this bill is overly burdensome on licensees. However, I would like to offer a broader policy perspective for the committee's consideration.

Chair Reynolds—Doctor Reynolds—if I may.

I fully support the goal of keeping children safe. As an advocate for Oregonians who use cannabis to manage debilitating and other medical conditions, I want products to be as safe as possible, and I want labeling and testing information—particularly for medical users—to be clear, accurate, and useful.

At the same time, many of the concerns raised in SB 1548—such as adverse effects, impairment, labeling, and consumer protection—are not unique to cannabis. These are issues that exist across multiple legal substances, including alcohol and tobacco.

Alcohol impairs memory and judgment, is illegal to use while operating a motor vehicle, and can cause both acute and long-term health harms. Tobacco use is well known to cause serious and often fatal health outcomes. Yet cannabis continues to be regulated with a level of specificity and precaution that is not consistently applied to other legal substances with documented risks.

For example, alcohol labeling does not include warnings outlined in this bill for cannabis products related to mental health conditions, pregnancy outcomes, or cognitive effects at higher proof levels. Tobacco, appropriately, includes a Surgeon General's warning. Cannabis, by contrast, is often treated as uniquely dangerous, despite evidence showing it to be less harmful overall and widely used for both medical and adult use.

We all recognize that legal substances carry risks: alcohol can cause significant harm, tobacco has severe long-term consequences, and cannabis can have short-term effects on memory. The policy question here is whether we approach these risks with consistency and proportionality across substances with harmful adverse effects.

For many years, the Legislature has expressed an intent to treat cannabis in a manner similar to alcohol. If that remains the goal, then our regulatory framework should reflect that principle and avoid further isolating cannabis without clear public health benefit.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to take no further action on SB 1548.

Thank you.

