

Chair Hassan, Committee Members, Representative Stephenson, my name is Todd Harris, and thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony for the House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee hearing on HF100.

I am a native Minnesotan and co-founder and CEO of Plift, a hemp-derived beverage company.

Since our inception, Plift's mission has been to hire and nurture the next generation of master builders in BIPOC and underrepresented communities. By giving our employees ownership in our company, we will teach them how equity builds generational wealth. While we are currently just 5 employees, we are well on our way towards making a significant impact.

We've also started a hemp- and CPG-product incubator - empowering entrepreneurs to build their dreams and create meaningful jobs in their communities. CPG businesses need a little bit of everything - product formulators, designers, e-commerce, operations, sales, marketing and other professional support services. As these upstart brands build momentum, they'll turn to their communities and offer meaningful full-time employment opportunities for others. We're actually on track to help another Black-owned beverage brand launch in Minnesota this summer.

I'm blessed and privileged to have achieved so many of my professional goals through hard work and the support from my family and friends. I want to use my privilege and decades of professional experience to help entrepreneurs who look like me build a business and achieve their dreams. I would love to apply for a Cannabis Industry Training Grant - enabling me to help more entrepreneurs sooner.

The current definition of "INDUSTRY" at 146.29 is ambiguous and I would strongly suggest that it be expanded to include the hemp industry as well - after all, they are both the same cannabis plant.

From my experience, I would also like to encourage the following changes to bill:

- subsidizing the cost of fingerprinting for low-income individuals who want to work in the cannabis industry.
- specifically allow employees to begin their employment while any background checks are in-progress,
- remove the single license cap limit for low-potency retailers.

I want to be perfectly clear, Plift is in full support of the legalization, decriminalization, and repair that needs to be done in the communities most impacted by the war on drugs, but not at the expense of the established and federally legal hemp industry and all the businesses that have invested in building their companies and are already employing Minnesotans.

I'd like to close my written testimony with the profound words from the late Senator Paul Wellstone: 'We all do better when we ALL do better.'

Thank you for the opportunity to share my written testimony to the Committee.

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