

April 9, 2025

Dear Co-Chair Her and Co-Chair O'Driscoll:

I write regarding the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) provisions in the Commerce omnibus bill. We appreciate the work of the committee to strengthen the cannabis laws in Minnesota. Your consideration of the agency budget proposals will support OCM's mission to launch a safe, well-regulated, equitable, and sustainable cannabis market. As noted below, we request continued discussion regarding the proposed cuts to the CanRenew community reinvestment program.

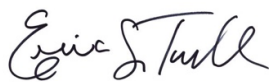
The support for OCM's operating budget request will help cover expected growth in employee compensation and insurance, rents, IT services, and other operating costs. Coupled with carryforward authority included in the governor's state government budget recommendations, this support will enable OCM to maintain current levels of service for Minnesotans.

The inclusion of the governor's recommended changes to the process for issuing a cannabis testing facility license will support a timely market launch by preventing potential testing bottlenecks and prioritize health and safety of the market. Additionally, the minor clarifying change to the criteria for individuals to be considered a social equity applicant will ensure that OCM continues implementing the law in line with the vision of the original cannabis legislation. The provision that extends the availability of CanRenew's first year of funds beyond the 2024-25 biennium will ensure the full amount appropriated can be invested into the community as the program is established, accountability metrics are designed, and outreach is conducted.

Finally, we are concerned about the proposed reductions to the CanRenew community reinvestment program. The office has worked diligently to launch the program with accountability and equity at the center, and the initial requests for the program total more than \$22 million for youth development, health and safety, and economic development. Supported widely by industry and community partners, this program represents an opportunity for the state to repair the harms caused by cannabis prohibition in communities across Minnesota. We look forward to continued discussion about this important program.

Thank you again for your work to ensure OCM can continue to launch a safe, well-regulated, and sustainable cannabis market. We look forward to future discussion and partnership.

Sincerely,



Eric Taubel, Interim Director