

Dear Mayor Armacost and Board of Trustee Members,

We are a group of concerned Hastings residents who have reviewed the arguments both for and against adding dispensaries and lounges in Hastings on Hudson. **Together, we strongly recommend that the Village votes to Opt-Out.** We support this choice for a variety of reasons, all of which proceed from a base realization: that a beneficial change to our village is not currently supported by the facts and data available. Current data suggests that adding a dispensary and/or lounge may cause harm as outlined below.

Our recommendation to Opt-Out is based on important considerations:

1. The risks to our residents' health and welfare increase with local commercialization. Available scientific data is clear: proximity to dispensaries and density of dispensaries increases youth and young adult intention to use and actual use (including use frequency). Correspondingly, youth and young adult regular use are related to increased depression, psychosis, suicidal ideation, lower cognitive functioning, and lack of motivation for achievement.

Talks with school and community leaders reveal that these substance abuse realities are not abstract and remain a significant challenge in Hastings on Hudson, with some families affected severely. Promoting local marijuana commercialization and consumption is not aligned with protecting the health and welfare of village residents.

2. The State MRTA laws are unknown. Neither of two brand-new state regulatory agencies, the Cannabis Control Board and Office of Cannabis Management, have developed their regulations or policies. Importantly, once these policies are developed, many - like outlet density, marketing, and potency - will not be within local control.

3. We believe revenue will be inconsequential in terms of our local budget. The outlier example of towns in Massachusetts, which benefit from marijuana tourism, will not apply in Hastings on Hudson. In reality, increased use of non-local-taxed sales options (as already provided for in state law), such as non-domiciled micro-businesses and online delivery services, will reduce local revenue to a baseline much more similar to any other

business that we might welcome. This undermines the economic case for privileging cannabis.

4. Marijuana is legalized and decriminalized in New York State. These movements began with and reflect a true cause of social justice. Adding dispensaries in Hastings on Hudson is not social justice. It is commercialization, where the truest goal is revenue. Like with many industries we now ethically eschew, the proposed commercialized cannabis model is extractive. It is dependent on a sales model of nearby convenience, which exploits chronic users and imposes downstream costs on both villages and consumers. Cannabis will already be widely and readily available. We see no ethical case or purpose for a 'main street' sales model which permanently changes the nature of our Village downtown.

5. Current data from long-legalized states such as Oregon and Colorado reveal the complexity of trying to separate the benefits of marijuana legalization from the significant downsides. Even in these long-legal states, policies remain in flux as concerns and challenges mount. In the case of New York and Westchester, there have been no public health, public safety, environmental, or economic understandings developed by an interdisciplinary panel of experts. Hastings on Hudson has not filled this gap. It is not investigating or modeling the impact of dispensaries and/or lounges in Hastings on Hudson. Opting Out is the only option which would allow the village to fulfill its responsibility to assess and plan.

We hope our Board of Trustees recognized that we as Hastings residents embrace much of the potential social good that will come from legalization and decriminalization. As on many topics, we are willing to review and consider evidence honestly and openly. In time, we may come to embrace aspects of commercialization. But that time is not now. Current facts and understanding do not support local marijuana commercialization. Given the decision at hand, the small time-frame, and available data, we implore that the BoT supports Opting Out.