

JULY 8, 2024

Dear Great Falls City Commission,

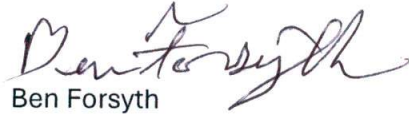
Marijuana, as allowed by your commission, unnecessarily supports in our community a type of drug that meets all the legal criteria of a dangerous drug in Montana state laws (50-32-101, 50-32-201, 50-32-202, and 50-32-222). Locally sold marijuana that your policies and regulations approve, clearly create serious psychological and physical harms to hundreds of your local constituencies. That violates (1) your sworn commitment per your oath of office to the Constitution of the United States (Preamble) , (2) to the Montana Constitution (Article II, Section 3 &4, and seven other stipulated constitutional concepts), (3) to several state laws (16-12-101, 76-2-304, and others), (4) to Great Falls City Code (17.4.050), and to common logic.

A factually confirmed state document and a professional testimony about the spreading harms of marijuana have been presented to you recently. They are:

1.] The Great Falls police chief stated in a public city commission meeting last fall that the calendar year (2021), following a majority state-wide voter acceptance of recreational marijuana on November 3, 2020, the violent felony rate in Great Falls went up 84% in the next calendar year (2021) even though it was not yet legal to sell recreational marijuana until January 1, 2022. That major documented crime increase affected all citizens and their safety, not just cannabis users. That violent crime increase created huge costs to the law enforcement, our judiciary, and the incarceration sections of our local governments. The Great Falls police chief stated that records indicate that over 80% of that rise in dangerous crime was related to drug use. It should be noted that marijuana is the most common non-medical drug in the state and its use is documented as greater than all other illegal drug uses combined. It has scientifically been proven that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a major chemical in all cannabis, is scientifically related to lack of the mind's emotional control. In the 24 communities across the country that have accurately recorded violent rates in relation to marijuana use, all have found a decrease when marijuana THC potency was reduced to safer levels. Scientific statistics have proven that the reduction of THC potency to a safer level will increase the safety of communities and improve measurable life styles of citizens.

2.] There is a section of the Montana Department of Health and Human Safety called the Hospitalization Discharge Data System that keeps track of all hospitalizations and their prognosed causes, in every hospital in the State of Montana. The six months after I-190 was approved (Jan 1, 2021- June, 2021), that state section documented a state-wide increase of hospitalizations related to serious marijuana-caused harms at an epidemic level of 5,218 hospitalizations in just one year. Recreational marijuana was not legally approved by law until January 1, 2022. During the school year that is included in part of that year (Sept. 2020-June 2021), Montana's emergency department's recorded 163 cases involving marijuana problems. Of those cases, 22% involved children who were 10 years of age or younger. It is obvious the details, wording, and enforceable considerations of current laws are not protecting many of our citizens and children.

As currently allowed by state laws 16-12-101(2)(J) and 16-12-301, laws need to be created locally to increase the safety of marijuana cultivation, manufacturing, and sales of all cannabis in our community. As examples from across the country indicate, to not do so is going to increase the serious crime rate, related hospitalizations and suffering, and will lower the quality of life of all our citizens. The sooner such corrective measures are created and instituted, the less psychological and physical suffering our citizens will experience and the lower will be the increased direct and indirect costs, in our local governments related to cannabis harms.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Forsyth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ben" and last name "Forsyth" clearly legible.

Ben Forsyth

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GREAT FALLS CITY COMMISSION

SUGGESTED REGULATIONS TO REDUCE LOCAL CANNABIS HARMS

JULY, 2024

1.] Allow only the marijuana strain called CANNABIS RUDERALIS (CR) to be grown, processed, and sold within the Great Falls City limits.

ADVANTAGES:

A.] CR is a legitimate biological strain of marijuana and meets the specified concepts of the will of the majority of voters expressed November 3, 2020 in initiative 190.. It contains so little of the dangerous marijuana chemical Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) that it would take approximately one hundred and fifty servings of CR to equal about one serving of higher THC potency marijuana that can be currently purchased in Great Falls. All CR still contains the marijuana chemical Cannabidiol (CBD) which can remove all the harms of locally purchased THC, and can still form the beneficial effects of medical marijuana if properly used as doctor prescribed.

B.] CR grows so much better in northern areas of the globe that it requires less fertilizer, can grow more prolifically in Montana, and does not pollute the local soils, water, and air nearly as much as current cannabis plants like those produced by just one massive local growing operation that cultivates an estimated 40,000 plants per year (Green River Cultivation- located at 55 32nd Ave. South).)

C.] CR is locally so healthy a plant that it does not require the hugely expensive treatments for sometimes dangerous chemicals to reduce mold, decrease fungus problems, and eliminate bugs that feed on marijuana plants cultivated indoors as required in Montana by state law. To increase profits, cheaper imported products containing caustic chemicals are often preferred by the marijuana industry to do these jobs. If the current less-efficient chemical enforcement we are experiencing from the Montana Cannabis Control Division and existing state laws are an indication, this is a major problem.

D.] Forms of cannabis grown currently in Montana achieve much taller height (Sativa strains -20 foot tall, Indica strains- 6 feet tall) than CR which, at 3 feet of maximum height, takes up much less room, lowers the necessary air purification expenses, cuts the necessity of clean air movement in half, and requires fewer disagreeable-odor controls that neighbors currently find offensive. CR is easier to grow in smaller, money saving, spaces.

E.] Because Cannabis Ruderalis (CR) is agronomically considered to be an "auto flowering" plant, it grows to maturity in one half the development time of all other local marijuana strains. That means that legal marijuana of the CR strain can create twice the yearly production of current cannabis crops and makes much more money per planting effort than current available strains.

F.] The auto-flowering characteristics of CR require less sunlight for shorter periods each growth-day. To achieve maximum plant production, the marijuana industry nationwide uses

expensive , high intensity specialized grow lights to achieve a very costly imitation of the sun to increase productive eighteen hours per day. Our local “pot” industry is not required to generate its own electricity as Boulder County, Colorado has stipulated to its residents. That creates a local huge expense which is driving up the cost of all electric power in Montana. Such huge, wide-spread electricity price increases are not as necessary if the local cannabis cultivation operations would be required to generate its own power through solar, water fall, mechanical, and other power sources as in Boulder County, Colorado.

G.] In the last fifty years, science has proven in volumes of quality research, that THC in our currently available marijuana strains reduces brain material density and brain shape in certain areas of all human brains. The effected brain sections do not function as well causing reduced emotional control, lowering problem awareness and solving, decreases detailed thinking, and alters personality in dose dependent ways. As found in thousands of professional scientific studies, the earlier “pot” exposure is initiated, the higher the THC potency used, the more frequently THC is used, and the longer the period of use, the greater the damaging effect of tetrahydrocannabinol to reduce mental functioning. Because CR does not produce the self-glamorizing personal highs caused by THC, it does not create the damage to the human brain like the more potent marijuana strains currently available in Great Falls.

2.] Numerous volumes of scientific research have proven that the more available marijuana is, the more it will be used, and the more it will be justified by dependent and addicted users. Many studies have shown that states with greater availability have more cannabis-related hospitalized psychotic problems, suffer more physical harms related to marijuana use, have higher per capita violent crime rates, and experience fewer productive work hours and days per year. Statistics have proven that greater cannabis availability does effect the economy resulting in lower economic results over time.

3.] The economic harms to the local general economy are often over-shadowed by the high profits of the cannabis industry. But nation wide closer examinations finds that higher availability and potency of cannabis can reduce on-the-job work production and creates more expensive sick days, no-show work days, job loses, non-productive effort, higher insurance rates, increased unemployment claims, and greater public-financed work-comp problems. Statistical calculations in other states have recorded that such expenses average about ten times the tax payments of the typical state wide cannabis industry. That constitutes a much greater economic expense related to cannabis that is seldom calculated by financially depressed government agencies.

I have personally experienced employees who use marijuana moderately or heavily and are much less efficient at doing their jobs than less intelligent helpers. They do not care about work, and drive for work purposes in horribly dangerous ways. One of my marijuana-influenced drivers had a head-on collision around a curve on lower river road while delivering for business reasons. He was driving in the wrong lane and had a head-on collision. My mistake was in trying to help him with his addiction. Therapeutic efforts did not correct his marijuana problems in the long term, and became a point of contention between us.

4.] Currently, I can personally count 16 marijuana retail outlets in Great Falls. Only 13 are legally registered with the Montana Department of Revenue as required by law. Of the 13 that are legally registered, 2 are not in appropriate legal locations, and 6 are not operating by all required state laws and regulations. I find inadequate efforts are being done by state agencies to correct those discrepancies. That is a seldom recognized problem that costs all citizens, and massively benefits the cannabis industry financially. All existing, and created regulations and laws need to be enforced consistently for all cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, and retail sales in order to more successfully protect the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens.

A new retail cannabis outlet is currently being built at 920 11th St. N. It is only 10 feet within the industrial zone boundary, is within 25 feet of an occupied home, and is within 200 feet of domiciles containing very young children. While not registered with the state, the new facility is legally located, but it violates the meaning of our state law requiring marijuana outlets to be 500 foot distance from schools to prevent harmful influence on young children. This critical distance between cannabis distributing entities and the homes of very young children should be a major concern everywhere. Several Montana cities have already legally extended the school-to-marijuana retail outlet distance to 1000 feet to protect children. We need to do the same. People living near the new facility at 920 11th St. N. have already complained to their Neighborhood council. Enforcement of all state laws are not conceptually efficient enough at preventing possible marijuana harms. Locally, we need several new laws to protect our citizens in meaningful ways concerning visibility and distance from outlets to domiciles. We need safer local laws to prevent harms to local youth as Montana law 16-12-101(2)(J) allows. This new marijuana retail outlet should not be licensed until more effective distance-to-domicile laws are created and our children are protected in the future.

5] If Great Falls achieves the number of legal marijuana retail outlets per capita, as already seen in Missoula, our number of outlets could increase to about 35 in our town. As seen all over our nation, such density of cannabis availability would lead to much greater numbers of violent crimes, documented marijuana-related hospitalizations, and increased psychological and physical harms and related expenses. Restricting marijuana sales to just Cannabis Ruderalis (CR) in Great Falls does not require 16 to 35 marijuana retail outlets. Several communities across the nation, within the approximate Great Falls population range, who have legalized only CR have limited their outlets to between 3 and 5 such businesses. Our developing cannabis operations seem to adequately compare to each of those communities. The problem for the city commission would be finding a legal way to limit sixteen outlets to just 3-5 total cannabis cultivators, manufacturers, and retail sales operations. If members of the cannabis industry in our town would sue the city because of this reduction, city attorneys in other towns nation-wide have claimed a perfect defense to be the provable facts about marijuana harms to the local populace and the proven safety of reducing availability. The national constitution, the state constitution, the code of the City of Great Falls, several existing laws, and common sense dictates an immediate reduction of marijuana potency and availability.

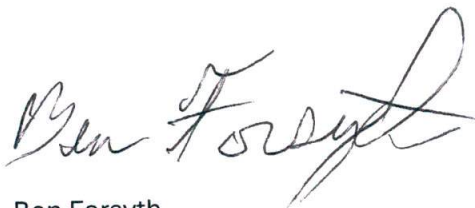
6.] All recreational marijuana cultivated, manufactured, or sold in the city of Great Falls should not exceed .03% THC potency. That is a proven harmless potency that would save the local economy money; would increase the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens; and would benefit our children more completely.

7.] The City Commission can expect that dependent and addicted users of cannabis would, in a short time after implementation of this law, justify the circumvention of laws that require less potency and availability of cannabis they are accustomed to acquiring. I have discussed this problem with numerous attorneys, drug treatment professionals, and law enforcement officials. Most have arrived at the decision that a process should be set up to have all cannabis retail outlets log each sale along with the user's name, date, and time-of-sale into a central computer site within a few minutes before each sale. That effort would prevent multiple, harmful, dependent, or addicted purchasers from accruing a dangerously higher volume of product by going to several outlets within a harmful period of time.

Law enforcement in our community should be specifically trained to look for the visible symptoms of frequent or heavier marijuana use and how to investigate the legality of the person's acquisition methods. That sale's requirement would be made easier with the sale records being established electronically at the time of all marijuana purchases. The Montana Department of Revenue may already have such information. They might reduce the expense of creating the site locally if the Cannabis Control Division's information for each cannabis purchase could be made available to local marijuana sales outlets and law enforcement in a timely manner.

8.] A system of punishment for marijuana over-use or involvement of, and scheduling of higher recreational potency should be developed by the City Commission. As in other communities around the country, punishments should include fines (perhaps \$500.00 or more) and recommended addiction treatment for first offenses. Second offenses should include higher fines (perhaps several thousand dollars) and a court appointed scheduling of treatment. Third offenses should involve fines in the tens of thousands of dollars, jail time, and extensively required treatment while incarcerated. Punishments should be made in agreement with existing state laws (45-9-102 (Possession of dangerous drugs), and 45-9-103 (Possession with intent to illegally distribute),

9.] Any regulations or policies written by the City Commission must comply with existing Montana laws 45-5-628 (Child endangerment), 45-8-101 (disorderly conduct), 45-8-103 (Riot), 45-8-109 (Civil disorder), and 45-9-110 (Manufacturing of dangerous drugs). Local laws should conform to state laws while making the commission more effective in protecting the HSW of local citizens.



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