

Chairman Solomon and members of the Committee:

My name is Kevin Hoffman, and I am the owner of Firebrand, a Rhode Island cannabis cultivator specializing in higher-end flower. I am unable to appear in person and respectfully submit this written testimony in support of House Bill 8414. I want to give the Committee the perspective of a brand-forward Rhode Island cultivator — a company whose product is not just cannabis, but a consumer brand we have spent real effort building.

Firebrand is a consumer brand. We have invested in product quality, consistency, and a reputation that our customers recognize and trust. That is the lens I bring to this bill. What House Bill 8414 makes possible, for a company like ours, is the chance to take the consumer knowledge and quality standards we have developed in the regulated cannabis market and apply them to an accessible, intro-level low-dose product that a much broader set of adults can actually find and buy — in particular, through the licensed liquor-store channel.

That channel matters to us for a specific reason. Presently, many adults will never walk into a cannabis dispensary. A well-made low-dose beverage, sold where adults already shop for beer and wine, lets an established Rhode Island cannabis brand reach those consumers with a responsible, approachable product — one designed from the start as a low-dose adult beverage, not as a substitute for anything else. For a brand-forward company, the adult-beverage channel is not only a sales outlet; it is how a quality Rhode Island brand becomes known to people who would otherwise never encounter it.

House Bill 8414 lets us do that the right way. Because the bill routes these products through licensed retailers and the existing three-tier system, with testing, labeling, age verification, and Cannabis Control Commission oversight, we can build a beverage with dedicated packaging and a deliberate pricing position — a genuine product, presented honestly, that reflects the same quality standards our customers already associate with our name. That is ordinary, healthy brand-building in a regulated adult category, and it is exactly the kind of investment a stable statute invites and an unregulated gray market discourages.

Like other independent Rhode Island cultivators, we also value that this channel exists at all. Limited vault and shelf space in cannabis retail is hard for an independent producer to win and keep, and that market does not always work in favor of smaller, brand-focused cultivators. The licensed adult-beverage channel gives a Rhode Island brand like ours a real and separate path to consumers for a low-dose product. Preserving and stabilizing that path in statute is one of the most consequential things this bill does for companies our size.

Finally, the point that underlies all of this: a brand is a long-term investment. No company spends what it takes to develop packaging, set a pricing architecture, and build consumer recognition for a product category whose regulatory footing is shaky. Regulatory stability is the

precondition for that investment. If House Bill 8414 provides a clear, durable framework, Firebrand is prepared to invest in bringing a quality Rhode Island low-dose beverage to market through licensed channels. Without that stability, that investment cannot be made.

For these reasons, Firebrand respectfully urges the Committee to advance House Bill 8414. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Hoffman

Owner, Firebrand, LLC