

May 21, 2026

Representative Joseph J. Solomon, Jr,  
Chair House Committee on Corporations  
houseCorporations@rilegislature.gov

Dear Chair Solomon,

I am a Rhode Island resident of over a decade, and a member of a worker-owned cooperative that applied for one of the new Worker Owned Cooperative Adult Use Cannabis Retail licenses called PVD Flowers. I write in support of H8544, which would restore momentum to Rhode Island's stalled cannabis retail licensing process. Prospective licensees — particularly undercapitalized social equity and cooperative applicants — have endured years of frozen progress, hemorrhaging costs with no clear path forward. Meanwhile, cultivators face constrained market access and consumers have fewer choices, while a handful of incumbent dispensaries capture outsized profits. H8544 gives the Cannabis Control Commission a viable path to move forward.

We do offer two suggestions. First, the removal of four of five social equity qualifying criteria is a significant change. If necessary to resolve legal challenges, we urge the General Assembly to commit the Commission to opening Social Equity Fund grant applications on the same 60-day timeline as licensing reopens, preserving feasibility for those who have been shut out. Second, we recommend clarifying the bill's language so the Commission is required to "begin accepting applications for new retail licenses" — rather than "institute a new retail licensing process" — and that the application window be capped at 30 days to ensure timely, transparent implementation.

Rhode Island's cannabis industry has been stalled long enough. We urge the committee to advance this bill and restore confidence that the state is committed to a fair and workable marketplace.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Buller