

Thursday, March 12, 2026

The Honorable Matthew L. LaMountain
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: S2962 – An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – The Rhode Island Cannabis Act

Dear Chair LaMountain,

The Cannabis Control Commission (Commission) submits this letter of support to provide educational context regarding S2962 – An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – The Rhode Island Cannabis Act. This legislation was introduced at the request of the Commission and would amend the Rhode Island Cannabis Act (Cannabis Act) to remove the statutory requirement for subcommittees under the Cannabis Advisory Board (Board), while preserving the Board itself as an advisory body, a change the Commission supports to streamline the Board's advisory structure.

The Cannabis Advisory Board operates with multiple subcommittees organized around defined subject matter areas. The Cannabis Act does not require formal reporting by these subcommittees, however, the Commission assigned targeted topics and questions to them during early implementation. Their input and subject matter discussions informed key elements of the Commission's regulatory drafting process, including packaging and labeling standards, diversity and inclusion programs, and social equity program design.

Since that time, the Commission has gained practical experience facilitating the statutory structure of the Cannabis Advisory Board and its required subcommittees. Through this experience, the Commission has identified structural and administrative challenges associated with maintaining six advisory public bodies, each subject to the Open Meetings Act. These include challenges with quorum requirements, frequent last-minute cancellations, and an inefficient and administratively burdensome governance model resulting from the layered board and subcommittee structure.

The proposed amendment would consolidate advisory functions within the Cannabis Advisory Board from six total public bodies to a single public body. This approach would not eliminate public input or advisory participation but rather streamline operations and allow the Board to focus on broader policy considerations without the logistical constraints associated with five subcommittees.

Rhode Island's current statutory structure is more prescriptive than those of many other states with cannabis advisory bodies, where the use of subcommittees is discretionary rather than mandated. The proposed change would align Rhode Island with common governance practices while preserving advisory engagement.



The Commission offers this information to assist the General Assembly in evaluating the operational benefits of the proposed legislation and remains available to provide additional context or answer questions as the bill is considered.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle A. Reddish, MS, MPH
Cannabis Office Administrator

CC: The Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Jacob Bissaillon
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff
Patricia Resende, Director of Senate Policy