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Dear Delegate

I am writing as a Virginia business owner and participant in the Commonwealth's regulated hemp industry to express serious concern regarding the Conference Committee revisions to HB 643. As rewritten during crossover, this bill effectively outlaws a wide range of compliant Virginia hemp products—products developed, tested, and sold in full adherence to the legal framework established by the General Assembly under SB 903 just two years ago.

Virginia has already implemented robust safeguards—independent of federal requirements—to ensure consumer safety and accountability, including:

- Strict 21+ age restrictions and child safety protections
- Comprehensive marketing limitations, prohibiting imagery appealing to minors (e.g., animals, fruits, or body parts)
- A VDACS Hemp Enforcement Division with authority to impose significant penalties
- Clear product standards, including a 2 mg THC cap per package or a 25:1 CBD-to-THC ratio

In 2023, Virginia made a deliberate, forward-thinking decision to create a structured and enforceable hemp marketplace under VDACS oversight. That system has since fostered a legitimate, transparent, and economically beneficial industry—supporting jobs, generating tax revenue, and providing consumers with safe, regulated alternatives. The current version of HB 643 undermines that progress.

This shift is particularly concerning given that the Fourth Circuit has affirmed Virginia's authority to establish regulatory standards beyond federal law (*Northern Virginia Hemp and Agriculture, LLC v. Commonwealth of Virginia*, 2025). The Commonwealth has already exercised that authority responsibly. Reversing course now—without meaningful industry input—risks dismantling a functioning system in favor of uncertainty and economic harm.

Throughout this process, both our industry and our customers have been unfairly characterized. The term “intoxicating” has been broadly and inconsistently applied, often implying illicit conduct where none exists. Our company, like many others, has operated in strict compliance with Virginia law—undergoing licensing, background checks, testing protocols, and ongoing regulatory oversight. We are not bad actors; we are compliant businesses serving adults who rely on these products for wellness and quality of life.

It is also important to recognize that “intoxicating” is not a uniform standard. What may be impairing for one individual may be therapeutic or functional for another. Meanwhile, other industries operating under similarly complex—or even conflicting—federal frameworks, such as Virginia’s state-controlled medical marijuana program, continue to operate without comparable exclusion.

The proposal’s practical impact on existing businesses is severe. Companies that have invested in licenses, facilities, payroll, insurance, and product development are now being forced into a restrictive lottery system that may exclude them entirely. Criteria such as geography or unrelated background considerations are arbitrary and punitive. After years of compliance, these businesses are being asked to start over—or shut down.

Our customers span more than 200 cities and towns across Virginia. While heavily concentrated in Central Virginia, particularly the Richmond region, they represent a truly statewide, consumer-driven market. This is not a fringe industry—it directly serves thousands of Virginians who rely on these products.

The economic consequences are already evident. Retailers are pulling back, sales are declining, and uncertainty is spreading across the supply chain. A once-growing, multi-billion-dollar sector is now at risk of being dismantled almost overnight.

Enclosed is a catalog of Virginia-made hemp products that are now at risk of prohibition. Printed locally in Lynchburg by Service Printing Inc.—a 130-year-old Virginia business—it was originally intended for distribution to more than 2,000 registered hemp retailers. It now stands as a tangible representation of what Virginia stands to lose.

Additionally, included is a two-page extract from the *2026 State of the Cannabis Industry Report* (First Citizens Bank and Whitney Economics), which provides a data-driven analysis of the industry:

- Virginia’s hemp market is part of a multi-billion-dollar sector, with U.S. cannabinoid markets estimated at \$28–\$35 billion and broader hemp-related industries exceeding \$145 billion
- Non-intoxicating products (CBD, CBG, CBN) account for approximately 27% of the market, while segments such as beverages alone represent \$9.9–\$14.9 billion in demand
- Even these figures understate the industry’s size, as they exclude major non-intoxicating categories such as topicals and pet products

This is not simply about one company or one sector—it is about policy consistency, economic stability, and the fair treatment of law-abiding businesses and consumers.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the current language of HB 643, engage directly with industry stakeholders, and pursue a path that preserves both public safety and the economic vitality of Virginia’s hemp market.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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P.S. In recognition of America’s 250th Anniversary—and the uncertain future of Virginia’s hemp industry—we are offering a limited-time **25% discount** on all Redfern Hemp Co. products using code **SAVEHEMP25** (expires in July). This may be one of the last opportunities to experience Redfern’s fully compliant Virginia-made products.



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