

February 22, 2024

State of Arkansas
Medical Marijuana Commission
1515 West 7th St., Suite 503
Little Rock, AR 72201

**RE: License No. 145, Greenlight Dispensary
Change of Location Request to Jacksonville, AR
OPPOSE**

Dear Medical Marijuana Commission:

The City of Sherwood has a history of supporting medical marijuana in this state and welcomed the opening of a dispensary within city limits to serve the patients in dispensary Zone 5. Sherwood respectfully opposes the change of location request made by License No. 145, Greenlight Dispensary, to relocate to the City of Jacksonville because the relocation cuts against the initial application process and scoring related to the location of the dispensary, accessibility to patients, and the economic impact on communities.

The dispensary application required the physical location of the dispensary to be secured and disclosed. In Zone 5, there are three dispensaries in the City of Little Rock, one in the City of Conway, and one in the City of Sherwood. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 population data, the population of Little Rock is 202,864, the population of Jacksonville is 29,130 and the population of Sherwood is 33,082. The proposed change of location for License No. 145 places two dispensaries in neighboring cities less with a population of 62,212 and leaves two dispensaries in a city with a population of 202,864.¹ These numbers do not account for the remaining population of Pulaski County of 399,145 total. The recent rush to relocate dispensaries appears not to serve the intent of the amendment, the rules promulgated by this Commission, or the citizens of the State of Arkansas, as initially intended, but as a chess match to siphon assets and profits.

The City of Sherwood has benefitted from a dispensary that has majority ownership that includes residents of Sherwood, Cabot and North Little Rock. The dispensary located in Sherwood is not run by a management company but by people who call this city home. It appears out of state management companies and the profits of medical marijuana being sent out of state is also alarming to the Arkansas

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in the United States: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-IP-EST2022-POP)*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved February 21, 2024, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>

Legislature and this Commission as evident from the legislative hearing expressing concern of ownership and management companies being owned from out of state actors.

If this relocation is approved, the City of Sherwood will suffer adverse economic impact through the projected loss of revenue to our locally owned and operated dispensary and the taxes they generate for the city. The City of Jacksonville, already benefits from very robust revenue sources like Little Rock Air Force Base and a very large industrial park with major employers. They are also a Community Development Block Grant entitlement city. These are federal funds administered by the state and given to the City of Jacksonville that are used to foster economic and community growth through job creation, business development and neighborhood revitalization. Sherwood is not eligible for these funds. The City of Sherwood is a sales tax-based economy and the success of our dispensary is a vital revenue stream we use to provide city services.

Initially, when the city was asked to support a Dispensary locating here, it was met with trepidation. Those concerns were overcome by assurances that it would be a revenue generator and we would be gaining a tremendous community partner. Our dispensary not only generates funds for the city, but our owners have a proven track record of community involvement. Not only do they provide financial assistance to multiple nonprofits within the community, but since they live in our community, they care that we maintain a high quality of place.

The City of Sherwood respectfully urges your careful and thoughtful consideration of the change of location proposed by License No. 145 in light of the bad precedent this move establishes, in contradiction to the essence of the medical marijuana amendment and this Commission's rules, by over saturating an area and population center taking from the largest population center, removing revenue from a larger population city to benefit a smaller population neighboring city, and injuring a locally owned and controlled Sherwood dispensary. Please include the City of Sherwood as a community that opposes the proposed change of location of a Little Rock dispensary to Jacksonville.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo Heye-Townsell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Mary Jo Heye-Townsell
Mayor