

May 04, 2026

The Honorable Abigail D. Spanberger
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Re: SB 542 (Aird) / HB 642 (Krizek) and SB 543 (Aird) – Evidence-Based Solutions for Regulating Adult-Use Cannabis Sales

Dear Governor Spanberger:

We write to urge you to allow [SB 542](#), [HB 642](#), and the related enforcement legislation, [SB 543](#), to take effect on July 1. Together, these bills address the real issues surrounding cannabis in the Commonwealth today: an already-existing, unregulated marijuana market operating openly across the state while consumers, communities, and law enforcement are left without the protections of a legal framework.

Let's be clear: these bills do not create a marijuana market in Virginia. That market already exists. What these bills do is replace today's predatory and unaccountable illicit operators with a regulated marketplace, enforceable rules, oversight, product safeguards, age verification, and the strict consumer safety standards already in use for Virginia medical cannabis.

Just as importantly, Virginia did not arrive at these solutions overnight. The Commonwealth has spent six years debating this issue, consulting experts, and evaluating best practices. In 2020, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) issued its landmark report, [Key Considerations for Marijuana Legalization](#), providing a comprehensive roadmap for policymakers. That same year, Governor Ralph Northam's Marijuana Legalization Work Group conducted an extensive review process and produced a detailed, nearly 500-page report, [Impact on the Commonwealth of Legalizing the Sale and Personal Use of Marijuana](#), examining regulatory design, public health, criminal justice, equity, and implementation.

The work did not stop there. In 2021, the General Assembly established the [Cannabis Oversight Commission](#), an 18-member legislative body charged with overseeing implementation of Virginia's 2021 legalization law. The Commission also included the [Work Group to Study Policy Proposals for Expedited Sale of Cannabis](#), which examined how Virginia could move more quickly from legalization on paper to a regulated retail system in practice. Through public meetings, testimony, and stakeholder engagement, these bodies heard from experts, advocates, regulators, impacted communities, and industry participants. After the Oversight Commission sunsetted in 2024, lawmakers convened the [Joint Commission to Oversee the Transition of the Commonwealth into a Retail Cannabis Market](#) to continue evaluating policy proposals, implementation challenges, and the steps necessary to launch a safe and regulated marketplace with continued stakeholder input.

The Virginia Cannabis Control Authority has also continued similar work through its [Cannabis Public Health Advisory Council](#) and [Cannabis Equity Reinvestment Board](#), which were specifically established to advise on consumer safety, public health, and market diversity. Few states have approached legalization with this level of planning, expertise, and sustained stakeholder engagement.

That matters because the bills before you reflect the lessons of that process. They are not theoretical. They are solutions tailored to Virginia's actual conditions. They respond to the widespread sale of unregulated intoxicating products, the lack of consumer protections, the absence of retail oversight, and the need for effective enforcement tools aimed at bad actors rather than responsible adults.

SB 543 is especially important in that regard. Enforcement works best when clear legal rules exist alongside a regulated market. Delaying legal sales while demanding stronger enforcement only preserves the disorder of the current system. Regulation and enforcement must work together. These bills do exactly that.

Virginia did its homework. Experts were consulted. Stakeholders were heard. Real problems were identified. These bills deliver the real solutions Virginia demands.

We respectfully urge you to allow the Commonwealth to move forward with a safer, smarter, and more accountable cannabis policy.

Respectfully,

Arminitia Cannabis Education
Greener Things
Healing Seed VA
Hemp House Wellness
Jushi
Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Marijuana Justice
Marijuana Policy Project

National Organization for the Reform of
Marijuana Laws
Nolef Turns
Peace, Dr. Michelle, Ph.D.
RVA Cannabis Co.
Virginia Cannabis Association
Virginia Minority Cannabis Coalition
Virginia NORML

