

Communication from Public

Name: Angelo Elisse

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 02:59 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I am commenting on the proposal to ban kratom in LA County CA. Kratom has been getting a bad wrap calling it “gas station herion” when this is not the case. Its origin is plant based and this medicine helps so many pain patients get the relief they need since the war on RX opioids. This plant has helped not only pain patents but people getting off harder drugs. Kratom is a great alternative from street drugs. Not one overdose has been confirmed just kratom in the systems. The overdoses are from the other drugs in their system not kratom itself. Kratom helps in more ways than pain and drug withdrawal but emotional as well. Lots of people say taking a small dose helps boost the mood and concentration. I believe that consumers have the right to choose if they want to take it or not. We have alcohol everywhere, weed everywhere, even mushrooms. So I think with regulation we should be able to purchase if desired just like we choose to drink or smoke.

Communication from Public

Name: Scott

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 03:00 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Scheduling the Kratom leaf is a huge mistake, and will make many customers who suffer from chronic pain and other related ailments criminals overnight. Yes, this could be your grandmother. Do the right thing and schedule the synthetic 7OH garbage. That's stuff is straight poison. The leaf saves lives?? ??

Communication from Public

Name: Josh Hammack

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 10:30 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Personal Testimony Regarding Kratom Regulation – Veteran, Business Owner, and Resident Perspective To the Honorable Members of the City Council, My name is Josh Hammack. I am a long-time resident of Los Angeles County, a doctoral student, a disabled veteran, and a father of three. I am also a real estate investor, a fundraiser, and a member of the board for a non-profit prison ministry. I am writing to you today to urge for sensible regulation, rather than a ban, regarding the sale and use of kratom. Like many of my fellow veterans who returned home with service-connected disabilities, my transition to civilian life was fraught with challenges. For a time, I struggled with alcohol as a way to manage the physical and mental toll of my service. Breaking that cycle is a monumental task, but I sit before you today healthier than I have ever been in my life. Kratom was the tool that allowed me to walk away from alcohol entirely and reclaim my health. Because of this plant, I am not just "getting by"—I am thriving. I am a present, active father to my three young children, including a newborn, and a devoted husband. The stability I have found has allowed me to focus on my doctoral studies and advance my career with a level of clarity and purpose that was previously out of reach. In addition to my doctoral work, I manage my private real estate investment company and fundraise for higher education. My daily life requires high-level decision-making, and financial responsibility, and a commitment to the community. I am a provider, an employer, and a tax-paying contributor to the local economy. My success in business is a direct result of my health. Kratom allows me to manage my service-related discomfort without the debilitating side effects of traditional pharmaceuticals, ensuring I can show up for my tenants, my employees, and my family every single day. I am the definition of a responsible consumer: I use this plant to enhance my productivity and my ability to serve others. I understand and share the Council's concern for public safety. However, a total ban is not the solution; it is a reactionary measure that would strip a life-saving tool away from thousands veterans and professionals who rely on it to stay sober and productive. I advocate for the implementation of the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA). This framework provides common-sense safeguards, including:

- Age Restrictions: Ensuring these products are only available to

adults. • Purity Standards: Requiring third-party lab testing to ensure products are free from contaminants or dangerous additives. • Labeling Requirements: Providing consumers with clear information on what they are putting into their bodies. I have dedicated much of my life to service: first in the military, and now through my professional work and non-profit board service. I ask that you respect the autonomy of veterans and responsible adults by choosing regulation over prohibition. Please protect our right to choose a path of health, sobriety, and community contribution. Thank you for your time and for your service to our community. Sincerely, Joshua Hammack Disabled Veteran LA County Resident & Business Owner

Communication from Public

Name: Brandie Foster

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 11:16 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I have struggled with restless leg syndrome, insomnia, and anxiety for many years. I tried every medication available for restless leg syndrome, but none provided relief without causing debilitating side effects. The restless legs were the biggest barrier to sleep, and without proper rest I was unable to function normally. At one point, my lack of sleep nearly cost me my job. I often wondered how I could continue living like this. About two years ago, I discovered kratom. After carefully researching it, I began taking a small amount at night. I can't explain how wonderful it was to be able to lie still for the first time in years! Kratom has been the only thing that has ever effectively relieved my restless leg symptoms and insomnia—without any negative side effects. For the first time in years, I was able to sleep consistently. Because of that, I can now function like a normal person: I can work, participate in daily life, and feel present again. It also helps me with anxiety when needed and with some severe back pain I get after working a really long day. Without kratom, I truly believe I would not be able to function as I do today. For me, it has been life-changing. I strongly support responsible regulation, including quality control and age restrictions. However, I respectfully ask that it not be banned entirely. Kratom is genuinely helping people like me who use it responsibly and rely on it to live a productive, healthy life.

Communication from Public

Name: Marc Perdue

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 04:40 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I STRONGLY OPPOSE Agenda Item #7 (File 25-135) or 25-1357. My name is Marc and I am a 40 year old male. My experience with Kratom and its legality is the focus of this letter. I have been sober for 8+ years now because of Kratom and 7OH products. I have had a long and treacherous battle with health issues. I have had multiple recurring bone tumors on the medial side of my tibia below my knee. The diagnosis and subsequent surgeries started at the age of 14. I have had six major surgeries on my right leg. Three of which were for tumor removal and the other three for MRSA treatment and debridement. My knee is completely damaged from the tumor destroying the top of my tibia and the MRSA completely eating away at my meniscus and cartilage. I have severe chronic and acute pain in that leg because of this. I am not a candidate for a knee replacement due to the bone being too damaged and not a stable site for the new artificial joint. I have also been in a severe car accident that lacerated my left arm, broke the fibula in my left leg, and tore the meniscus in my left knee. The treatment of these ailments came with a lot of prescribed narcotic pain medications on a regular basis from age 14 on. My tolerance to these medications started to grow astronomically over 15 years and they stopped working effectively. I eventually was buying OxyContin on the street and abusing them heavily. This eventually led to IV heroin and cocaine use and the loss of anything of real value I had. I struggled with this crippling addiction for 18 years. I tried methadone, Suboxone, Vivitrol, complete abstinence and had NO significant success with any of them. Finally, I found that a strong 12 step recovery was what I needed, and it would work temporarily but the physical pain I suffer from would become too much and I would relapse on opiates. 5 1/2 years ago, I found kratom and decided to try it for pain relief. It helps me with pain, it helps me sleep, curbs craving, allows me to function and participate in activities of daily living without being in extreme pain. I do not have extreme tolerance building problems with kratom like I did with traditional opioids. The side effects are extremely minor and do not impair my judgment or ability to function. I am up at 4:30 AM every day and at the gym by 4:45 cycling for an hour. I have lost weight in a healthy fashion due to my exercise and diet change that kratom has helped me make. I

am much more positive about taking care of myself and am able to be present for life. My pain hasn't completely vanished, but it is manageable due to kratom. I am the healthiest and happiest I have ever been in my entire life! My spiritual growth has been a big factor as well in my 12 months of sobriety along with kratom. I have found that these two things working in harmony have literally saved my life! I am a completely different person, and my family has their son back. I do not want to die and the fact that this harmless plant is being targeted makes me scared for my life. Let's focus on alternative rehabilitation and recovery methods. Let's focus on the fentanyl and other analogues specifically...NOT A NATURAL BOTANICAL! Please...let's take a step back here and look at the success stories and reanalyze things. Making this plant illegal will immediately criminalize innocent Americans that will suffer if kratom is taken away. The war on drugs has been a failure and taking away such a helpful tool people use to avoid lethal prescription drugs and heroin/fentanyl will cause even more deaths. People have bad reactions to everything. The number of hospitalizations and deaths from acetaminophen is astronomically higher than deaths supposedly caused by kratom. People are almost always having issues from polysubstance use where kratom is not the only drug in their system. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you show empathy for chronic pain and recovering addicts that use this plant. Let's work with the American Kratom Association on advocating for safe manufacturing practices to ensure adults 21+ have access to pure and unadulterated kratom products in the USA. Keep it out of gas stations and require ID verification for smoke shops or vendors that sell kratom. Hold them accountable for now complying just like you would with tobacco or alcohol. Please do not turn hard working American's that use this plant and/or 7OH into criminals overnight or lead them to the streets to die from Fentanyl because they can't take a plant alternative that is 10x safer and more effective. Sincerely, Marc Perdue

To whom it may concern:

My name is Marc and I am a 40 year old male. My experience with Kratom and its legality is the focus of this letter. I have been sober 8 years with help of Kratom and CBD.

I have had a long and treacherous battle with substance abuse. I have had multiple recurring bone tumors on the medial side of my tibia below my knee. The diagnosis and subsequent surgeries started at the age of 14. I have had six major surgeries on my right leg. Three of which were for tumor removal and the other three for MRSA treatment and debridement. My knee is completely damaged from the tumor destroying the top of my tibia and the MRSA completely eating away at my meniscus and cartilage. I have severe chronic and acute pain in that leg because of this. I am not a candidate for a knee replacement due to the bone being too damaged and not a stable site for the new artificial joint. I have also been in a severe car accident that lacerated my left arm, broke the fibula in my left leg, and tore the meniscus in my left knee.

The treatment of these ailments came with a lot of prescribed narcotic pain medications on a regular basis from age 14 on. My tolerance to these medications started to grow astronomically over 15 years and they stopped working effectively. I eventually was buying OxyContin on the street and abusing them heavily. This eventually led to IV heroin and cocaine use and the loss of anything of real value I had. I struggled with this crippling addiction for many years. I tried methadone, Suboxone, Vivitrol, complete abstinence and had NO significant success with any of them. Finally, I found that a strong 12 step recovery was what I needed, and it would work temporarily but the physical pain I suffer from would become too much and I would relapse on opiates. 8 years ago, I found kratom and decided to try it for pain relief. It helps me with pain, it helps me sleep, curbs craving, allows me to function and participate in activities of daily living without being in extreme pain. I do not have extreme tolerance building problems with kratom like I did with traditional opioids. The side effects are extremely minor and do not impair my judgment or ability to function.

I am up at 4:30 AM every day and at the gym by 4:45 cycling for an hour. I have lost weight in a healthy fashion due to my exercise and diet change that kratom has helped me make. I am much more positive about taking care of myself and am able to be present for life. My pain hasn't completely vanished, but it is manageable due to kratom. I am the healthiest and happiest I have ever been in my entire life! My spiritual growth has been a big factor as well in my 8 years of sobriety along with kratom. I have found that these two things working in harmony have literally saved my life! I am a completely different person, and my family has their son back. I do not want to die and the fact that this harmless plant is being targeted makes me scared for my life. Let's focus on alternative rehabilitation and recovery methods. Let's focus on the fentanyl and other analogues specifically...NOT A NATURAL BOTANICAL! Please...let's take a step back here and look at the success stories and reanalyze things.

Making this plant illegal will immediately criminalize innocent Americans that will suffer if kratom is taken away. The war on drugs has been a failure and taking away such a helpful tool people use to avoid lethal prescription drugs and heroin/fentanyl will cause even more deaths. People have bad reactions to everything. The number of hospitalizations and deaths from acetaminophen is astronomically higher than deaths supposedly caused by kratom. People are almost always having issues from polysubstance use where kratom is not the only drug in their system.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you show empathy for chronic pain and recovering addicts that use this plant. Let's work with the American Kratom Association on advocating for safe manufacturing practices to ensure adults have access to pure and unadulterated kratom products in the USA.

Sincerely,

Marc Perdue

Email: mperdue98550@gmail.com

Communication from Public

Name: Stephanie Salsman

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 05:45 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I'm writing to oppose agenda item #7. I'm a lifelong California resident, and a responsible kratom leaf consumer. I've had chronic back pain for over a decade and kratom in its pure natural form helps me manage my pain. In July of 2025 the fda announced they were going after the synthetic called 70h, senator Mccary stated that they were not going after natural leaf Kratom. Please consider regulation instead of prohibition. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Renee Canfield

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 06:08 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: PROHIBITION DOESN'T WORK - it only makes the black market bigger and more dangerous for more people. Please don't ban natural leaf Kratom and make Kratom consumers criminals. I have family and friends that live there and if you ban I won't be able to visit anymore. Every day I wake up my alarm clock is excruciating severe chronic pain. I suffer with a slipped L-4 L-5 disc, Barrett's esophagus, kidney disease, hypothyroidism, degenerate disc disease & facet arthropathy from my neck down through my lumbar, sciatica pain and rheumatoid arthritis all throughout my body. I have had so many surgeries and procedures that I feel like a living Raggedy Ann -all stitched together. Severe excruciating pain is my alarm clock in the morning- I get up and I can barely walk - I drink my Kratom leaf tea and about a half hour later my pain levels drop to manageable - I can get up, walk better and simply do everyday life. I love the fact that with Kratom leaf tea I am clear headed and can concentrate better . All I feel is pure pain relief with no side effects and absolutely NO BUZZ - definitely not something I could say when taking my Dr prescribed medications. PLEASE DON'T BAN NATURAL LEAF KRATOM. Thank you for your time

Communication from Public

Name: Marcelle Morfin
Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 06:18 PM
Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to respectfully oppose Resolution 25-1357 and the proposed support for a countywide ban on plain leaf kratom products. As an Army veteran, I care deeply about public health, responsible policy, and protecting the well being of the communities we serve. Policies that impact thousands of responsible adults deserve careful review, balanced discussion, and meaningful public input. A broad ban is a serious action, and it should not move forward without fully considering the real world consequences for consumers who rely on plain leaf products. Many adults use plain leaf kratom as part of their personal wellness routines. Others report using it as an alternative to more harmful substances. Eliminating access does not eliminate demand. History has repeatedly shown that prohibition often pushes consumers toward unregulated markets, where product quality, labeling, and safety controls are far less reliable. If the goal is public safety, then thoughtful regulation is the stronger path forward. Standards such as product testing, accurate labeling, age restrictions, and enforcement against adulterated or synthetic products directly address risk while preserving responsible adult access. A blanket ban does the opposite. It removes safer, transparent purchasing channels and increases the likelihood that consumers will seek products elsewhere without safeguards. It is also important to distinguish plain leaf products from highly concentrated or synthetic derivatives that may present different risk profiles. Treating all products as identical ignores these critical differences and can lead to policy outcomes that are broader than necessary. California is already actively debating regulatory frameworks, including AB 1088, which further underscores the importance of allowing a thoughtful statewide approach rather than creating a patchwork of local prohibitions. I urge the committee to slow this process and ensure that all stakeholders are heard, including consumers, responsible retailers, public health experts, and community members. Decisions of this magnitude should be grounded in balanced evidence and proportional response, not accelerated timelines. Please prioritize regulation, oversight, and education rather than prohibition. Protecting public health and preserving responsible adult choice do not have to be competing goals. With thoughtful policy, both can be achieved. Thank you for your time and for your

consideration of public input on this matter. Marcelle Morfin
Woodland, CA

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 06:24 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I'm a responsible kratom consumer, I take it for my aches and pains, I'm union laborer and it can be quite rough physically. Kratom in its natural form is way different than the chemical synthetics that are new to the market are harmful. The pure leaf has been around for quite sometime. It's been used in southeast Asia for centuries with no incident. Please consider regulation for responsible adults like myself. Thank you for your consideration.

Communication from Public

Name: Julia Smith

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 06:26 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to respectfully oppose Resolution 25-1357 and the proposed support for a countywide ban on plain leaf kratom products. As a young working professional in California, I pay close attention to policies that affect public safety, consumer protection, and responsible adult choice. Decisions like this deserve careful consideration because they impact real people who rely on safe, transparent, and regulated marketplaces. A blanket ban does not eliminate demand. It often shifts activity toward unregulated markets where there is far less oversight, fewer safety controls, and greater risk. If the goal is public health, regulation is the more responsible path. Measures such as product testing, accurate labeling, age restrictions, and enforcement against adulterated or synthetic products directly support safety while maintaining accountability. It is important to recognize the distinction between natural plain leaf products and highly concentrated or synthetic derivatives that may present very different risk profiles. Treating all products the same can result in policy that is broader than necessary and may create unintended consequences. I respectfully encourage the committee to consider balanced, evidence based policy that prioritizes safety, oversight, and education rather than prohibition. Thoughtful regulation supports both public health and responsible adult decision making. Thank you for your time and for considering public input on this important matter. Julia Smith Sacramento, CA

Communication from Public

Name: Victor Morfin

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 06:34 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to respectfully oppose Resolution 25-1357 and the proposed support for a countywide ban on plain leaf kratom products. As a working Californian, I strongly support policies that genuinely improve public safety and protect our communities. Decisions of this magnitude deserve careful evaluation because they can create consequences that extend far beyond their original intent. Broad bans often do not eliminate demand. Instead, they can push activity into unregulated spaces where there is less transparency, fewer safety controls, and greater potential risk. If the goal is to protect the public, a thoughtful regulatory approach is more likely to achieve that outcome than prohibition. Policies that focus on product testing, accurate labeling, age restrictions, and enforcement against adulterated or synthetic products directly address safety concerns while preserving accountability. These types of safeguards help ensure that adults are not driven toward less reliable sources. It is also important to distinguish natural plain leaf products from highly concentrated or synthetic derivatives that may present different risk profiles. Treating all products the same can result in policy that is broader than necessary and may lead to unintended consequences for communities. I respectfully encourage the committee to take a measured approach, allow time for thorough review, and consider regulatory options that prioritize both public health and responsible oversight. Careful policy making strengthens community trust and leads to better long term outcomes. Thank you for your time and for considering public input on this important matter. Victor Morfin Woodland, CA

Communication from Public

Name: Evan Schwartz

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 06:57 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I OPPOSE THE RESOLUTION TO BAN KRATOM AND 7-OH IN COUNCIL FILE 25-1357. For each irrational, emotionally jarring comment that this resolution / council file may receive, there are hundreds of thousands of patients who, in L.A. alone, have benefitted from 7-OH and kratom. Importantly, patients have succeeded on these compounds without the side effects of traditional opioids. There are no known deaths from kratom or 7-hydroxymitragynine when taken alone or together. Kratom contains mitragynine. Mitragynine (MIT) is the prodrug of 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). If you ban kratom, you are effectively banning both MIT and 7-OH. If you ban 7-OH, you are preserving MIT, which forms 7-OH in the human plasma. Any restriction will cause consumers to search the black market for far more dangerous, often lethal, opioids -- which will always exist no matter what ban this City imposes -- they will just become more dangerous to take. AB 1088 has not passed the State Legislature and, recently, another piece of state legislation, which would have banned 7-OH, was modified to remove references to 7-OH. The American Kratom Association has led a campaign to fear monger about 7-OH, but it does not activate the beta-arrestin-2 pathways that opiates do. It therefore does not cause opioid-induced respiration depression, and there are no known deaths from 7-OH alone. To the contrary, when kratom and 7-OH were introduced onto the market (in particular, 7-OH), opioid overdoses DECLINED. This resolution is a dangerous proposal that would worsen public health outcomes in LA and is not grounded in scientific fact but rather political theater.

Communication from Public

Name: Drea Powers

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 11:34 AM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I've used kratom for over a decade. Kratom has been a positive and life-changing part of my wellness journey. It's a natural plant from the coffee family that helps me manage Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome, Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Severe Major Depression and Panic Disorder. I receive pain relief for the chronic pain some of these cause. Kratom allows me to avoid the harsh side effects that I've experienced from prescription drugs. I learned about kratom from my brother after it got him off of heroin. It has saved my sisters life, also. They both survived fentanyl poisonings in 2016. Kratom is the reason they reached sobriety and remain sober. It prevented me from getting addicted to pills. Addiction runs in my family- it could've been me. Research from Johns Hopkins University and the University of Florida shows that kratom's natural compounds work differently from opioids — they can relieve pain and improve mood without the dangerous risk of respiratory failure. Studies in Drug and Alcohol Dependence also found that kratom has a low potential for abuse and can even help people reduce dependence on harmful substances. Data from the CDC and the National Institute on Drug Abuse confirm that deaths linked solely to kratom are extremely rare — most cases involve other drugs or contaminants. Another concern of mine is the fact that alcohol has remained easily accessible while being responsible for tens of millions of deaths globally. These deaths have been attributable to alcohol since 2010 (very likely more than 30 million) based on the annual scales involved. Alcohol withdrawal is deadly whereas discontinuing kratom use is not. Kratom, namely plain leaf kratom is not deadly. That's why I believe regulation, not prohibition, is the responsible way. Requiring testing and labeling so products are safe and adults can make informed choices. For me, and for millions of others, kratom has meant a better, healthier quality of life. Please listen to the science, and to the people who use it responsibly every day. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Communication from Public

Name: Dijon Evans

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 10:49 AM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: My name is Dijon Evans and I am a California resident who is very concerned about this potential ban on kratom products. Kratom has literally saved my life and given me the hope that I had lost due to the opioid epidemic and my medical history, losing the pain meds, because of the new opioid laws and the inhumane new rules that no longer permitted patients such as myself and millions of others who were also cut off from the opioid medications due to the illegal selling of opioids by the illegitimate sales of the medications, the illegal prescriptions that were given to those who absolutely didn't need them, but they were obtaining them in order to sell them to those who were trying to make a lot of money by selling them to those who were either addicted to illicit drugs or those who were now desperate because they had been cut off of the medications that they had Legitimate reasons for taking them and had been given Legitimate prescriptions for years, sometimes decades by doctors for Legitimate reasons. I was injured when I had just turned 16. I had a short leg cast put on too tight and it killed the nerves and cut off the circulation. The cast was only on for 4 days, but that was over 3 days too long. After that first week we were told that I was going to end up losing my leg, but I said that that wasn't going to happen! I was wrong! The top specialists had tried to save my leg for 10 years. Doing experimental surgeries and procedures, doing procedures that at the time were considered to be the correct procedures, surgeries and the proper treatments, but now we know that those only made the situation worse and made the nerve damage spread throughout my body, and the 10 years that my leg remained on, only helped to spread the infections, pulmonary embolisms, sepsis, gangrene, deep vein thrombosis, and allowed the osteomyelitis to find a place to hide in my system. It doesn't take much of an injury, a simple bruising to a bone, or just a bruise to anywhere and it leads to another bout of osteomyelitis (bone infection). I have been legally dead several times and on my deathbed several other times. I have full body CRPS with organ involvement, optical, occipital and trigeminal Neuralgia, multiple organ failure, and I have had more than 240 surgeries and procedures. I wasn't supposed to live to be 30, but here I am after a very difficult 30 years beyond that age, several near death escapes, and I just turned 62. I have had amputations, pulmonary embolisms, sepsis,

gangrene, 17 bouts of osteomyelitis and now also have osteonecrosis of my jaw, sinuses and facial bones, including the left inner ear, and soon to be the right. It is now affecting the entire inside of my skull, the soft inner bones. There is nothing that can be done for me because I am too high risk for the needed surgeries to repair my skull and inner ears. They can't do surgery because of the extremely high risk that I will develop osteomyelitis of my skull and the chance that it will lead to the infection of my brain. If by chance that I don't develop osteomyelitis, there's an even higher risk that the surgical bone placement would fail because of the necrosis. The only places that could put me into a medically induced coma and provide prophylaxis antibiotic treatment, and then do the surgery while still keeping me in a comatose state, are far enough away that I would have to be flown there. This cannot be done because I don't have any bone in-between my brain and inner ear that we need to provide the protection to our brain when we experience the pressure changes while in flight. So, now with everything else that I have encountered and fought to live through, I am nearing the end of the road. Not just because of my medical conditions, but because of my age. For over 15 years I was bedridden and unable to care for myself. Everything had to be done for me, and it included in home nursing care for the PICC lines.. My daughter has lived with this her entire life. My grandkids have as well! James, my partner has been subjected to this the entire time that he has known me and he's been an amazing, loving and caring man who has taken very good care of me! He's been subjected to so very much! So many times he has been told that he needed to say his goodbye to me because I wouldn't make it through the night. But each and every time that I pulled through the night- I would wake up to him holding my hand, watching me and crying tears of joy as I would open my eyes. Each time he would explain to me why I was in CCU, and he would begin to tell me what happened. HEach time he would just look at me and tell me how much he loved me. When opioids were removed from the picture, even though I was diagnosed as a terminal patient, but because I wasn't a terminal cancer patient- so I wouldn't be able to get through the worst known painful conditions that are known to us, this is what I experience. Please don't ban pure leaf, natural kratom products! Thank you

Communication from Public

Name: Kevin Buth

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 09:27 AM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Please do not ban natural kratom leaf products or full leaf products. They are helpful for mood, and a tool for sobriety, anti-alcohol. Natural leaf kratom is mild and far far different from the synthetic or extract 7-oh. Any product that is just natural leaf and mild should remain over the counter and still 21 and over! Please consider the benefits of a natural version of this plant. It is a miracle product and can really help people off alcohol and other opioid pain killer prescription drugs when it is a light, small dose of natural kratom leaf, unprocessed and doctored. See the clinical studies on natural lead kratom before making a vote that bundles full leaf alongside the unhealthy extract and synthetic versions. It's like pure cane sugar compared to high fructose corn syrup! The two just aren't the same as one is processed and concentrated and doctored by a lab and the other taken straight from the ground and placed into a bottle of Coca Cola. That is the same with kratom and the products out there today! We need more education, legislation and restrictions around how to source, process, package and present the healthy version of kratom to the public. Natural is better, always! I am sober off alcohol for 6 months now at 44 years old and kratom is a big reason why, with just one small drink a day of natural kratom I can work, play and live sober now. Everything in moderation! Kevin

Communication from Public

Name: Melody Woolf
Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 10:00 AM
Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Members of the Sub-committee, I have 12 years of positive lived experience with plain leaf Kratom. I was the only Kratom advocate in the country to be welcomed to the HHS press briefing stage last July by FDA Director Makary. In just a few days, I will be attending the Kratom Science Symposium at the University of Florida, where any concerns could be brought to leading scientists in person. Kratom has returned me to my family. My only regret is that I did not find it sooner. For over 20 years, I lived with chronic pain from fibromyalgia, arthritis, sciatica, and other conditions. Before consuming kratom, I was often bedridden and required assistance, which affected my ability to participate fully in family life. Eleven years ago, I began consuming plain-leaf kratom, and it gave me back my mobility and ability to fully engage with my family. In 2022, when my daughter and son-in-law's childcare closed unexpectedly, I provided full-time care for my granddaughter, saving them approximately \$50,000. This past summer, with major home repairs and high childcare costs, I again cared for my 3½-year-old granddaughter for four months, chasing her all over town — weekly trips to the Detroit Zoo, the library, and every nearby splash pad. I participate in local and state-level meetings on kratom regulation and spoke one-on-one with roughly 200 state legislators at the NCSL conference. I will be attending a scientific symposium again this year, where I will share my personal experience alongside researchers and regulators. I was also asked to speak at a joint HHS/FDA press briefing about the benefits of kratom and to distinguish it from the dangerous 7OH. Outside of advocacy, I sing in a chorus, performing for nursing homes and assisted living facilities as a form of community service, helping bring joy and connection to others. My personal experience demonstrates the profound impact kratom has on function, family life, and community engagement, and underscores the importance of patient perspectives in informing science and policy. We support protecting plain leaf Kratom, with common sense regulations such as an age gate, and truthful packaging, while prohibiting products containing over 2% of the metabolite 7-OH (7-hydroxymitragynine). In fact, in a recent Oval Office press conference, FDA Director Makary just mentioned that 7-OH was the problem, not the plain leaf. Please do not ban plain leaf Kratom for those who take it responsibly. Also, please do not conflate plain leaf Kratom with 7-OH, which is not Kratom. I support common sense regulation, such as an age-gate, truthful packaging, and banning products containing more than 2% 7-OH. Though I cannot attend in person, I would be happy to lend a voice of experience via Zoom or Facetime. I was just contacted by Springfield, MA to do that today. My number is 269 873-9592. More information and the science is found on my LinkedIn Profile: https://www.linkedin.com/in/melody-woolf-366a7b146?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app
Thank you for your time and consideration. Melody Woolf

Communication from Public

Name: Joel Burleson

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 11:42 AM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I respectfully oppose a ban on the sale of natural kratom in Los Angeles County. Natural kratom has played a genuinely positive role in the life of someone very close to me who struggled with substance abuse. Access to natural kratom gave him a healthier alternative and a social environment that supported recovery rather than relapse. In many ways, it may have been life saving. Today he is more stable, present, and engaged in his life and relationships...a real change from where he was before. While any substance should be used responsibly, banning kratom in its natural form would remove a tool that some people are using to move away from far more harmful substances. For individuals in recovery, safer alternatives can make a meaningful difference. I encourage the County to consider education, quality control, and responsible regulation rather than prohibition. Policies that preserve access while promoting safe use would better serve public health. Thank you for considering community perspectives like mine.

Communication from Public

Name: Tracie Crosco

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 11:48 AM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Banning kratom will prevent others like me to change their lives around for the better! Kratom has saved my life and our family. Im a 45 year old wife, mom and a cleaning business owner! Please dont hurt your people by banning. Alot of people utilize this for chronic pain over narcotics. You going to force them onto narcotics?! Because thats exactly what you will do with a ban. Please reconsider this.

Communication from Public

Name: Amanda Rainer
Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 11:48 AM
Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to ask to please NOT BAN kratom and 7oh. Regulation is key. I wouldn't be alive today without the plant and if its made illegal not only will my life tragically end so with hundreds of thousands of others. Making this a schedule 1 is ridiculous. We already have over crowded jails, this is not a danger. We need to focus more on drugs like fentanyl My Kratom journey???? I have been using Kratom for the last 8yrs after being on pain medication for 30yrs anxiety and depression meds for 10. I have degenerative and cervical disc disease, spinal stenosis, herniated and bulging disc, bone spurs on the spine, which has given me scoliosis as an adult , fibromyalgia, trigeminal neuralgia aka suicide disease, basically I live with 10/20 of the most painful conditions to live with and many more other chronic pain conditions. I lost my mother to the pain clinic and big pharmas drugs in April 2013...She didn't abuse them, she took less than what she was prescribed, but tramadol and morphine took her life. After losing my parents 7 months apart and seen what the struggled with medication wise per Dr's orders and how it destroyed them...I vowed to live a holistic as possible life style. I just recently came off my blood pressure medication as well. In 8 yrs I haven't had to consume over 50,000 pills. I get yearly blood work, as well as yearly ultra sounds on my organs. I have improved so much and all under my Dr's care with tapering off off my medications.... my blood work and organs scans have improved every year as well as my organs reversing the damage that the medication has done for the most part. Without kratom i wouldn't be able to enjoy the simple things in life such as taking a simple walk outside or just the ability to get out of bed daily. I don't believe I would still be alive today if it wasnt for kratom.

Communication from Public

Name: April Hale

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 12:35 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: I do not support a ban on plain leaf Kratom. Plain leaf natural Kratom is not the issue. It has safely been used by me for 9 years now for chronic pain. Millions use it for chronic pain. Banning this leaf will have economic consequences by anyone coming to LA county for vacation and those working there. I have been able to return to work part time thanks to this plant.

Communication from Public

Name: Justin Wolf

Date Submitted: 02/04/2026 12:25 PM

Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Members of the Rules, Elections and Intergovernmental Relations Committee, My name is Justin Wolf. I'm the Founder & CEO of New Brew, a Los Angeles-based 21+ alcohol-free beverage company that uses small servings of natural kratom leaf in a responsibly manufactured and marketed product. I'm writing to respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider any support for a blanket ban on kratom alongside 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). The City of Los Angeles has previously gone on record in support of AB 1088. That bill represents the correct, common-sense framework for addressing this issue. A blanket ban on both kratom and 7-OH directly contradicts that position and reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the difference between these two very different substances. AB 1088 is the solution. It bans the synthetic and high-potency products that are actually causing harm, including 7-OH isolates, while putting strict guardrails in place for natural kratom leaf products: 21+ access, labeling requirements, testing standards, potency limits, and enforcement mechanisms against bad actors. This approach is supported by medical experts, law enforcement agencies across California, and mirrors regulatory frameworks that have already been adopted by counties throughout the state. The same framework has been adopted in 19 other states, most recently New York. When policymakers take the time to review the science and listen to experts, the answer is almost always the same: regulation works better than prohibition. This approach also aligns with recent FDA guidance and enforcement priorities, which are focused specifically on concentrated and synthetic 7-OH products -- not natural kratom leaf. Kratom and 7-OH are not the same thing. They have completely different risk profiles. Treating them as interchangeable is the core error driving today's confusion. Natural kratom has become an important tool for many people in Los Angeles. New Brew is one example: thousands of Angelenos have used our responsibly formulated product to reduce or move away from alcohol altogether. These are everyday adults looking for healthier alternatives, not people seeking high-potency synthetic products. I want to be very clear: New Brew and responsible kratom vendors have been sounding the alarm on 7-OH for years. We fully support removing those products from the market. We share the goal of protecting public health. But

policy must be nuanced. Otherwise, the consequences are severe. The current enforcement posture has already caused widespread confusion, significant economic harm to independent retailers and small businesses, and unnecessary disruption to consumers who rely on responsibly made products. At the same time, it diverts taxpayer resources away from the real problem. I respectfully ask this Committee to urge the Los Angeles Department of Public Health to:

- Focus enforcement on synthetic and high-potency 7-OH products
- Support AB 1088 or mirror its framework locally
- Avoid a blanket ban on natural kratom leaf

This is the path that protects residents, supports small businesses, and aligns with expert guidance. I am happy to speak further with any member of the Committee or City staff. I have been on the front lines of this issue as a Los Angeles business owner, and I genuinely want to be helpful in getting this right. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. Respectfully, Justin

Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP

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November 14, 2025

Dr. Erica Pan, MD, MPH, FIDSA, FAAP
Director, California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue, MS 0503
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Subject: Request for Review of California Department of Public Health Policy on Kratom

Dear Dr. Pan,

I am writing this letter in my personal capacity having recently served as President Biden's Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy at the White House and as someone who has had the privilege of serving as West Virginia's State Health Officer under two governors. As the first physician to serve in this role leading to historic drops in drug overdose deaths and with experience at both the state and federal levels, I have seen firsthand how evidence-based, balanced policymaking can protect public health while also preserving access to safe, regulated products.

I respectfully request your review of recent enforcement action by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) banning the sale and manufacture of all kratom products in the state.¹ While the Department's public health mission is commendable, this action is inconsistent with the most current federal scientific findings and FDA policy direction regarding natural kratom leaf products and their clear distinction from chemically manipulated 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) products that do pose legitimate safety threats.^{2 3}

During my tenure as Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy under President Biden, I had the privilege of helping guide President Biden's first steps toward modernizing federal cannabis policy—an effort grounded in rigorous science, compassion, and a recognition that evidence, not stigma, must drive our public health decisions.⁴ We learned then, as now, that durable policy requires a *measured, evidence-based approach*—one that protects consumers without conflating natural, lower-risk products with synthetic or adulterated substances that present genuine harm.

This leadership from California was recently demonstrated when it refined its hemp regulations, preserving access to safe, non-intoxicating products while restricting those with artificially elevated cannabinoid concentrations. That balanced approach is precisely what is now needed for kratom: to separate natural botanical forms from chemically manipulated derivatives, aligning state policy with emerging federal science and the public interest.

¹ California Department of Public Health. *Foods, Dietary Supplements and Medical Drugs containing Kratom and 7-OH are Dangerous and Illegal to Sell or Manufacture*. NR25-016, October 24 2025.

Available at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR25-016.aspx>

² U.S. Food & Drug Administration. *FDA and Kratom*. (Public Health Focus) Available at <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-and-kratom>

³ U.S. Food & Drug Administration. *FDA Takes Steps to Restrict 7-OH Opioid Products Threatening American Consumers*. Press Announcement, July 29 2025. Available at <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-steps-restrict-7-oh-opioid-products-threatening-american-consumers>

⁴ The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Dr. Gupta Statement on President Biden's Pardon Announcement. October 6 2022. Available at <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2022/10/06/dr-gupta-statement-on-president-bidens-pardon-announcement/>

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Federal Developments Supporting Re-evaluation:

1. FDA Advances in Kratom Research

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently completed a human dose-finding study indicating that natural kratom leaf was well-tolerated at all tested dose levels with no serious adverse events. These findings contradict earlier speculative models suggesting opioid-like dangers and reinforce FDA leadership's stated commitment to apply "gold-standard science and common sense" to low-risk botanical products.⁵

2. FDA Commissioner's Clarification on 7-OH

On July 29, 2025, FDA Commissioner publicly drew a clear distinction:⁶

"Our enforcement focus is not on kratom leaf itself but on 7-hydroxymitragynine and other chemically concentrated byproducts that act as potent opioids and pose a genuine danger to consumers."

3. FDA Policy Under Revision

The CDPH's October 24 advisory ("Foods, Dietary Supplements and Medical Drugs Containing Kratom and 7-OH are Dangerous and Illegal to Sell or Manufacture") relies on statements from an FDA webpage that is currently under review to reflect updated human safety data and the federal distinction between botanical kratom and synthetic 7-OH products. Acting prematurely on outdated language risks misclassifying lower-risk botanical products as dangerous and stifling evidence-based harm-reduction innovation.

4. NIDA and Federal Research Support

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), has publicly stated that kratom "could hold value as a treatment for addiction" and merits continued research as a harm-reduction tool amid the opioid overdose crisis.⁷ NIDA has invested more than \$100 million in peer-reviewed studies demonstrating kratom's comparatively low addiction liability and potential therapeutic applications.

5. California Legislative Momentum

The California State Assembly unanimously passed AB 1088, establishing a regulatory framework for natural kratom products—registration, age restrictions, and labelling requirements—while explicitly prohibiting 7-OH and related synthetic derivatives.⁸ The CDPH's blanket enforcement action is inconsistent with that bipartisan legislative intent.

A Path Forward:

In an era when misinformation and reactionary policy too often displace evidence, California can once again set a national standard by adopting a measured, evidence-based approach—one that

⁵ See Ref. 2

⁶ STAT News. *7-OH elevated levels, FDA crackdown, kratom regulation, schedule I?* July 29 2025. Available at <https://www.statnews.com/2025/07/29/7-oh-elevated-levels-fda-crackdown-kratom-regulation-schedule-i/>

⁷ U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. *FY 2022 Budget Request for the National Institutes of Health* (Hearing). Available at <https://appropriations.house.gov/events/hearings/fy-2022-budget-request-for-the-national-institutes-of-health>

⁸ California Legislature. Bill CAB00034970. *Bill Search, 2025-2026 session*. Available at: <https://fastdemocracy.com/bill-search/ca/2025-2026/bills/CAB00034970/>

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differentiates safe, natural botanicals from synthetics, fosters transparency, and upholds public trust. I understand that while local jurisdictions in California are enacting their own ordinances, a Joint Legislative Hearing is also being considered to discuss the distinct differences between natural kratom leaf products and the dangers of chemically manipulated 7-OH products with the goal of setting a consistent statewide policy on these products.

Your leadership on this issue would not only align California with emerging federal science but also reaffirm the state's role as a model for pragmatic, data-guided public health policy.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to evidence-based policymaking. I stand ready to support your Department's review in any way that may be helpful.

Respectfully,



Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP

President, GATC Health

Former Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (2021-2025)

Cc:

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor

State of California

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