

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 25-1357

Comments for Public Posting: Re: Agenda Item #7 – Council File 25-135 Position: OPPOSE I am writing to formally OPPOSE Agenda Item #7 (Council File 25-135). I am a member of an impacted community, and I urge the City not to rush into banning kratom products without first holding a full study session to evaluate the evidence, the unintended consequences, and the real-world impact on Angelenos. Estimates suggest that over 200,000 people in Los Angeles use kratom products. This is not a fringe issue — it affects a substantial number of responsible, functional adults. I would be remiss not to mention that both the City and County of Los Angeles have played a role in the legal actions that have dramatically reshaped pain management in America. In May 2018, the City of Los Angeles sued nine pharmaceutical companies, including Purdue Pharma, Janssen, Endo, McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen. In 2022, Los Angeles County sued CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens for dispensing prescribed medications. Regardless of one's views on those lawsuits, the practical effect has been a tightening of pain medication access for legitimate patients. As someone who has lived with chronic pain for many years, I have personally experienced the consequences of the current medical climate: rigid pharmacy policies, prescription hesitancy, and dramatically reduced post-operative pain management. While illicit fentanyl is rightly viewed as a public health crisis, policy responses have increasingly restricted legitimate pain patients rather than addressing the illicit drug supply. Which brings me to kratom. For me — and for at least a dozen other responsible adults I personally know — kratom products have provided one of the most effective benefit-to-cost alternatives to traditional prescription pain management. I am not talking about intoxication or abuse. I am talking about functionality, stability, and quality of life. A strong case could be made that high-dose 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) pills warrant regulation due to their potency and potential for misuse. Reasonable regulation is not the same thing as prohibition. However, low-dose products and traditional unadulterated kratom leaf products do not present anything close to the level of public health risk that would justify removing them entirely from the market. We should also consider proportionality. At a time when highly potent cannabis products are legally and

widely available in Los Angeles — with far greater intoxicating effects — it is difficult to justify banning kratom leaf products that many adults use responsibly for pain management and wellbeing. History shows that when access to regulated options contracts, some individuals migrate toward more dangerous alternatives. We have seen the fentanyl crisis grow during a period when pharmaceutical pain medication became increasingly restricted. If kratom is removed from shelves, some percentage of users will inevitably seek more harmful substitutes. That is not speculation — it is consistent with established patterns in substance policy. The City should not rush to ban something that will have a negative effect on impacted communities. Instead, I respectfully request:

- A formal study session before moving this resolution forward
- Testimony from medical researchers, toxicologists, and public health experts
- Input from affected community members
- Consideration of targeted regulation rather than blanket prohibition

Public policy should reduce harm, not increase it. For many of us, kratom has been a stabilizing, harm-reducing alternative in an increasingly restrictive pain-management environment. Please do not move forward with Agenda Item #7 without further study and stakeholder engagement. I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE Council File 25-135 in its current form.