

September 23, 2020

The Honorable Phil Scott
Governor of Vermont
109 State Street, Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Governor Scott,

We write to you as a broad coalition of advocates for just and equitable cannabis policy in Vermont. The undersigned organizations and businesses come together in opposition to S.54, and in a shared commitment to creating cannabis policy for Vermont that is truly equitable, just and inclusive. While Vermont will not be the first state to establish a tax and regulate system, we do have the opportunity to demonstrate to the nation how cannabis policy can not only bring in revenue, but do so in a way that repairs past harms, prioritizes equitable market access, supports existing farms and Vermont-owned businesses, and bolsters our rural economies and communities.

The devastation inflicted by the War on Drugs, and the criminalization of cannabis, has disproportionately focused on communities of color, including here in Vermont. Its impacts have shattered the lives of individuals, families, and communities for generations and across generations. These impacts are long-lasting, complex, and both explicit and implicit including mental and physical health, socio-economic opportunity and positionality, incarceration, police and criminal justice system violence, housing, education, and more. The War on Drugs also must be acknowledged as only one of many tools of systemic racism employed amidst the broader history and impacts of institutional racism and xenophobia which has resulted in the dramatic disparities of business ownership, land access and ownership, access to capital, and more that are present in our communities today.

The decriminalization of cannabis, and the establishment of legal markets in various States, has thus far resulted in few if any outcomes that begin to address and redress this history. Instead, it has resulted in the furthering of systemic white supremacy, racism, and economic inequity in the cannabis industry. The legal cannabis market is estimated to become a \$40 billion industry by the end of 2020, yet Black-owned cannabis businesses only represent 4.3% of total market share. S.54 is a continuation of that policy which we find unacceptable for Vermont.

Rushing to pass this policy with laser focus on its economic benefit to those who hold political and economic power represents an unwillingness to reconcile with prior exploitations and makes you complicit with the continued perpetuation of economic oppression of Black and other people of color in Vermont.

We are calling on you to veto S.54 and commit to working with our organizations, communities of color, and small farms and businesses across Vermont to develop legislation creating a tax and regulate system in our state which sets a new standard for equity, reparations, inclusivity and representation. In addition, we ask that the Marijuana Commission be reconvened and asked to review the role systemic racism has historically played with this “drug” and provide a thorough

report in the same manner that reports were provided on substance abuse prevention, education and public safety.

Thank you,

Justice for All
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
Rural Vermont
Trace
Vermont Growers Association
Vermont Racial Justice Alliance
A Drop of Joy, LLC
Ardelia Farm & Co.
August First
Bennington College
Brattleboro Winter Farmers ' Market
Bread & Butter Farm
bSpoke Technology
C-Trax
Central Vermont Showing Up for Racial Justice
Coombs Criddle Associates
Crystal Ledge Farm
Diggers Mirth Collective Farm
Doolittle Farm
Draft Trash Middlebury
The Emerald Rose
Evening Song Farm
Farmrun
Fragrant Mountain Farm
Green & Gold CSA
Half Wild Farm
Jean Hamilton Consulting
Karne Choling
Latch Creative Company LLC
Littlewood Farm
Luna Bleu Farm
MadFreedom
Mender Medicinals
Meristem Farms
Mettawee Valley Hemp
Migrant Justice
NAACP
Nurse Grown Organics
Oak Hollow Farm
One Love
Origins of Food

Painted Tulip LLC
Post Oil Solutions
Rebop Farm LLC
Rights & Democracy Vermont (RADVT)
River's Bend Design LLC
Robinson Hill Beef
RopaNa
Sherry's of Vermont, LLC
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
SoftBank
Spring Hill Farm
The Corse Farm Dairy
Trenchers Farmhouse
Ula
Vermont Botanical Farm LLC
Vermont Cannabis Nurses Association
Vermont Healthy Soils Coalition
Vermont Law School's SBA's State Relations Committee
Vermont Racial Justice Alliance
Vermont Releaf Collective
Vermont Young Farmers Coalition
Wild Carrot Farm
Wilder Farm
Wildstone Farm
Wilson Herb Farm