

**Full Written Testimony – Pennsylvania Law Subcommittee
Thomas Bobrowicz – BF Extracts Hometown Hemp Shop – June 24, 2025**

Chair Laughlin and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record. My name is Thomas Bobrowicz, and I am the owner of BF Extracts Hometown Hemp Shop in Harborcreek, Pennsylvania. I have been active in the hemp industry since 2019, initially as a grower licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and now as the operator of a retail store providing federally legal hemp-derived products to adult consumers. While I am unable to attend this hearing in person, I appreciate the chance to share my perspective in writing.

This written testimony is submitted on behalf of small businesses like mine—businesses that have followed the law, invested in compliance and safety, and contributed to the local economy. Yet, we now face the growing threat of being regulated out of existence by policies written for and by the marijuana industry, rather than for the broader and legally distinct hemp sector.

1. Hemp Is Not Marijuana

Under the 2018 Farm Bill (7 U.S.C. §1639o), hemp is defined as *Cannabis sativa* L. and all derivatives of the plant containing no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC on a dry weight basis. This remains the legal boundary between hemp and marijuana. Hemp-derived products that meet this definition are federally legal and protected in interstate commerce. The Ninth Circuit affirmed this in *AK Futures v. Boyd Street Distro* (2022), holding that compliant hemp products are lawful regardless of their form or consumer use.

While states retain authority to regulate hemp production and retail sales, they cannot redefine hemp as marijuana or criminalize it in a manner that conflicts with federal law. Doing so violates the Supremacy Clause and undermines lawful interstate commerce.

2. Protecting Pennsylvania's Hemp Industry

As Pennsylvania explores legalizing cannabis for adult use, it is vital to protect the existing hemp industry. I urge lawmakers to:

- Uphold the federal definition of hemp.
- Create a separate licensing track for hemp retailers who do not wish to operate under the marijuana system.
- Reject monopolization by a limited number of marijuana licensees that could shut out lawful hemp businesses.

The Pennsylvania Medical Marijuana regulatory framework that favors 25 growers and 19 dispensary owners, while excluding thousands of compliant hemp businesses, would not only be economically damaging—it violates the spirit of federal law and fair competition.

A 2024 report by **Whitney Economics** found that the hemp-derived cannabinoid industry generates over **\$28 billion** in annual revenue and supports more than **50,000** businesses nationwide. Importantly, **93%** of those businesses are independently owned—not part of multistate marijuana corporations. The same report also found that **99.7%** of all consumable hemp products are sold to adults, not children, directly countering the narrative that the industry targets youth.

These data reinforce that hemp is not a fringe or unregulated industry—it is a legitimate, highly active economic sector that is overwhelmingly adult-serving and already operating within the boundaries of existing law.

It is also worth noting that the Whitney Economics report did not include data from gas stations, smoke shops, or convenience stores, where a significant volume of hemp product sales also occurs. This means the economic impact and market reach of the industry are likely even larger than reported, further emphasizing how expansive and important the hemp sector has become.

3. A Balanced, Responsible Framework: The Three Pillars

Rather than overregulate, Pennsylvania can lead with a commonsense regulatory model centered on three core principles:

1. Age Gating – Restrict hemp sales to individuals 21 and older.
2. Safety Testing – Require cGMP-certified lab testing for potency and contaminants.
3. Truthful Labeling – Ensure cannabinoid content and serving sizes are clearly labeled.

These pillars protect consumers while respecting hemp’s distinct legal status. Many in the industry already follow these standards voluntarily. Enshrining them in law ensures safety without conflating hemp with marijuana.

4. Debunking Misinformation: Psychosis, DUIs, Teen Use & the Synthetic Myth

Alarmist claims about a hemp-fueled public health crisis are not supported by national data. Lawmakers are often presented with misleading statistics—usually percentage-based increases lacking real-world context. A minor rise in rare incidents may appear significant as a percentage, but the total number remains negligible when compared to the tens of millions of adult hemp users.

Since 2019, more than 400 billion hemp-derived gummies and over 100 million vape cartridges have been sold in the United States. Despite this scale, serious adverse event reports are exceedingly rare. These products are being used responsibly nationwide. Furthermore, adverse event monitoring by national and state agencies—including the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, **American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)**, and various state health departments—have not reported a public health emergency attributable to compliant hemp-derived cannabinoids.

The Facts:

- **Psychosis:** Research associating cannabis with psychosis typically involves chronic, high-THC marijuana use—not hemp products. No large-scale study has shown psychosis outcomes tied to compliant hemp products.
- **DUIs:** There is no credible scientific evidence showing increased DUI incidents due to hemp-derived cannabinoids. DUI laws already prohibit driving under the influence—regardless of the substance—and should remain the standard.
- **Teen Use:** National surveys conducted by the **University of Michigan’s Monitoring the Future (MTF)** study and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)** both show that adolescent cannabis use has remained flat or declined since hemp products became widely available. These data sets are among the most widely cited and respected sources on national youth behavior trends. There is no youth usage crisis tied to hemp.
- **Synthetic Myth:** Some claim that cannabinoids like delta-8 or THCP are synthetic. This is false. These compounds are naturally occurring in hemp and are either extracted or safely converted from other cannabinoids through plant-based processes. Labeling them as synthetic is a fear tactic used to justify bans.

True synthetic cannabinoids—such as those found in illicit products like "K2" or "Spice"—are chemically manufactured without plant inputs and have been linked to seizures, psychosis, and death. Conflating legal hemp products with these dangerous synthetics is scientifically inaccurate and dangerously misleading.

Relative Risk: A Reality Check

- Alcohol causes more than 140,000 deaths annually in the U.S.
- Tobacco remains the top preventable cause of death with over 480,000 lives lost each year.
- OTC and prescription drugs contribute to tens of thousands of ER visits and fatalities.

All of these substances are legal and regulated—not banned—based on responsible-use models. Meanwhile, hemp and marijuana have caused zero confirmed deaths due to overdose, per public health agencies. Hemp products, used safely by millions, should not be held to a higher standard based on unfounded fear.

5. The Path Forward

Pennsylvania has the opportunity to modernize cannabis policy while preserving the hard-earned progress of the hemp industry. I respectfully ask this subcommittee to:

- Enact a **Hemp Product Regulation Act** that formalizes age gating, safety testing, and labeling.
- Oppose efforts to force hemp into the marijuana system.
- Affirm hemp's status as a legal agricultural commodity protected under federal law.

The hemp industry is not a loophole. It is a legitimate, growing part of our economy—one that deserves clear, fair, and distinct regulatory treatment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bobrowicz

Thomas Bobrowicz

Owner, BF Extracts Hometown Hemp Shop

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