

From: [Drea Powers](#)
To: darrell.curtis@kcmo.org; nathan.willet@kcmo.org; MayorO; public.testimony@kcmo.org; [Bough, Andrea](#); chrispin.rea@kcmo.org; [Rogers, Wes](#); [Clerk](#)
Subject: Ordinance 251028
Date: Friday, February 6, 2026 5:22:49 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am emailing you to ask that you do NOT ban plain leaf kratom.

My name is Drea Powers. 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.

Drea Powers