



1-26-26

Dear Finance, Government and Public Safety Committee,

The Missouri Restaurant Association (MRA) and the Greater Kansas City Restaurant Association (GKCR) are opposed to portions of Kansas City's proposed Ordinance [251028](#).

The MRA & GKCR appreciates the intent behind the ordinance protecting public health and safety but has submitted opposition to specific elements, particularly the proposed ban on Delta-8, Delta-9, and beverages, for the following reasons:

1. A Unified Regulatory Approach Is Essential

The MRA strongly believes that the regulation of emerging cannabinoid products should be led at the state or federal level, not through isolated municipal ordinances. Missouri is already taking meaningful action: in 2024, DHSS moved to embargo unregulated Delta-8 edibles under an executive order, and in 2025, the Attorney General issued cease-and-desist letters to 18 businesses selling THC and other unregulated intoxicants. At the national level, Congress passed a 2025 law redefining hemp and banning synthetic cannabinoids like Delta-8, with enforcement set to begin in November 2026. This clearly shows that oversight is underway and it should be coordinated, not fragmented.

2. Local-Only Bans Create Compliance Chaos

City-level bans create confusion for operators with multi-jurisdiction footprints and just shift the sale of these products across city lines. That's not enforcement, that's exporting revenue and creating inconsistency. The MRA is advocating for clear, consistent statewide rules that protect both public health and legitimate operators.

3. The Ordinance Risks Sweeping In Legitimate, Compliant Products

The current language defining "Intoxicating Cannabinoids" is so broad that it could unintentionally prohibit products that are federally compliant and manufactured well within Missouri's existing regulatory framework. For example, locally produced beverages like Boulevard's QUIRK THC Seltzer – Berry Jane meet both legal thresholds and quality standards, yet would likely be captured under this definition.

Rather than distinguishing between unregulated intoxicants and well-tested, clearly labeled, low-dose products, the ordinance treats all cannabinoids the same. This lack of nuance puts reputable producers and responsible retailers at risk and undermines efforts to build a transparent, accountable market. MRA believes smart regulation requires clear, enforceable definitions that don't punish legal innovation or confuse enforcement.

4. Hospitality Operators Are Already Trained to Manage Consumption

As the state's leading voice in hospitality, the MRA emphasizes that restaurant and bar operators are uniquely positioned to manage safe, responsible use of adult products. Liquor license holders are already trained in age verification, monitoring intoxication, and limiting overconsumption. Unlike dispensaries, which are highly regulated but do not allow on-site use, hospitality venues provide the only controlled environment where trained professionals can oversee real-time

consumption. If these products remain legal during this regulatory transition, hospitality is the safest place for them to be handled responsibly.

5. MRA Supports Responsible Regulation Over Blanket Bans

The MRA does not oppose regulation, in fact, we've supported recent legislative proposals like Missouri's 2025 Hemp Consumer Protection Act (HB 696 / SB 518), which would establish clear standards for age gating, testing, labeling, and retail licensing. These are the tools that ensure safety without penalizing legitimate operators. The MRA's position is rooted in the belief that smart regulation builds trust and keeps tax revenue local, while prohibition often drives products underground or out of local control.

6. The Economic and Legal Impacts Are Real

Kansas City operators, many of them small businesses, have already invested in compliant, hemp-derived product lines. An abrupt ban could force closures, layoffs, or immediate revenue losses. Further, because Missouri's constitution assigns cannabis regulation to the state via Amendment 3, this ordinance could raise legal preemption issues that expose Kansas City to unintended risk. The MRA is committed to protecting both public safety and business viability, and this ordinance, as written, undermines both.

The Bottom Line:

The Missouri Restaurant Association supports public safety, consumer transparency, and responsible industry conduct. We are not here to defend unregulated or unsafe products; we are here to advocate for balanced, enforceable policy that protects the public without disrupting legitimate commerce or inviting regulatory confusion. We urge Kansas City to align with state and federal efforts, and to pursue smart, targeted regulations that safeguards both communities and businesses.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Buddy Lahl".

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