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**Subject:** Scientific Opposition to Kratom Ban  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 2:29:50 PM

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Good Afternoon!

Please put this email correspondence on record for Ordinance #251028

### **Scientific Opposition to Any Proposed Kratom Ban**

Dear Kansas City Lawmakers,

I am a mother, a small business owner, and a holistic mentor to many. My passion is health freedom and am a proud natural medicine advocate. My personal journey with whole leaf ***natural*** kratom began after multiple emergency surgeries left me in debilitating pain; pain I was unwilling to manage with pharmaceuticals alone. While stories like mine are powerful, I believe the science speaks even louder. Below I share the work of leading medical professionals who have studied kratom extensively:

1. **Dr. Marilyn Huestis, AB, MS, PhD (Toxicologist)**  
Dr. Huestis stresses the importance of a balanced, evidence-based approach to kratom regulation. She clarifies that most reported “kratom overdose deaths” involved poly-substance use, adulterated products, or incomplete testing-not kratom alone.  
Testimonies: [Video 1](#), [Video 2](#).
2. **Dr. Christopher McCurdy (Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmacologist)**  
Dr. McCurdy has demonstrated that kratom’s primary alkaloids (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine) provide pain relief without the high risk of respiratory depression associated with opioids. His testimony also points to kratom’s promise as an aid in opioid withdrawal therapy. [Video Testimony](#).
3. **Dr. Kirsten Smith (University of Florida Researcher)**  
Dr. Smith’s research shows kratom’s potential as a harm-reduction tool, particularly for reducing opioid cravings and withdrawal symptoms. [Video Testimony](#).
4. **Dr. Ed Boyer (Renowned Toxicologist)**  
Dr. Boyer notes that adverse events tied to kratom are usually linked to contamination, misuse, or underlying conditions-not the plant itself. He emphasizes the importance of continued research over prohibition. [Video Testimony](#).
5. **Dr. Jack Henningfield (Addiction Research Expert)**  
Dr. Henningfield highlights kratom’s role as a safer alternative for individuals with opioid dependence and urges against classifying kratom as inherently dangerous without acknowledging its therapeutic potential. [Video Testimony](#).
6. **World Health Organization Report**  
The WHO’s Expert Committee on Drug Dependence reviewed kratom in 2021 and declined to recommend it for international scheduling. On page 39, Section 14, Dr. Marek Chawarski concludes: “*This lack of association between mitragynine blood*

*concentration and risk of lethality suggests that kratom consumption was not a causal factor in the vast majority of kratom-associated deaths, but rather was an incidental finding.* "WHO Report: [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/controlled-substances/unedited--advance-copy-44th-ecdd-review-report\\_kratom.pdf](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/controlled-substances/unedited--advance-copy-44th-ecdd-review-report_kratom.pdf)

Furthermore, when it comes to the heartbreaking stories of people losing loved ones, I want to be absolutely clear: we are on the same team in wanting proper regulations, responsible oversight, and, above all, education, so people know exactly what they are purchasing. I say this not from a place of debate, but from lived experience. I lost my father at the age of 12 because the system failed chronic pain patients. If he had access to kratom as a tool, I genuinely believe he would still be here today.

The instinct to want to retaliate when you lose someone is deeply human. But destroying the lives of countless others who rely on this leaf for a multitude of reasons - many of whom use it safely and responsibly, strips away a fundamental constitutional right: freedom of choice.

There are plenty of substances lining the shelves of grocery stores, liquor stores, and vape shops that have zero therapeutic value. And yet, as history has taught us repeatedly, prohibition does not work. It drives harm underground, it punishes the wrong people, and it removes tools of healing from those who genuinely need them.

Removing access to a natural plant medicine would not only be ineffective, it would be truly cruel - and in my opinion, wholly unconstitutional. All we are asking for is balanced, evidence-based regulation that protects consumers without punishing the very people trying to reclaim their health and quality of life. States such as Georgia and many others have instead chosen to adopt **Kratom Consumer Protection Acts (KCPA)**, which set standards for purity, labeling, and age restrictions; a framework that you could easily replicate. Example: [Georgia KCPA Bill](#). There are also local ordinance variations that can give you proper framework. If you can ban you can regulate!

Eliminating safe and effective alternatives like whole leaf kratom could do more harm than good. Please think of the veterans, cancer patients, and chronic pain sufferers that rely on this plant to improve their quality of life. Proper regulation, not prohibition, ensures safety, education, and access while protecting against misuse.

I urge you to consider a research-driven regulatory framework that prioritizes consumer safety while preserving access to this natural tool for those who benefit from it.

Thank you for your time, your open-mindedness, and your willingness to investigate the evidence with both scientific rigor and compassion.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Mercier  
Hopeful Consumer & Advocate

*"You have to bounce in life with JOY! Your strength lies in your smiles and songs."*

- Harbhajan Singh

