

City Council Regular Meeting

November 20, 2025

FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Public Comment Packet

ITEM(S)

2-AA (ID 25-1568) BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

Contents of Supplement: Public comment emails

Item(s)

Supplemental Information:

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From: [Christopher Deaney](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Please Do Not Ban Natural Kratom
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 12:48:18 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

My name is Christopher, and I discovered Kratom in 2015 during one of the most challenging periods of my life. What began as a search for something to help me manage daily pain turned into a journey that completely reshaped my understanding of health, healing, and the natural world.

At just eight years old, I was hit by a car. That one moment changed everything. Between the ages of eight and thirteen, I suffered roughly forty knee dislocations. By the time I was thirteen, I had undergone my first knee surgery. At twenty-two, I needed a second. Living in constant pain became my everyday life. I would wake up every day with one goal: to get through the pain just enough to function.

Doctors prescribed a long list of medications over the years, strong ones. Demerol was part of my teenage routine. My tolerance was high early on, and like many in the same situation, I fell into a cycle of ever-stronger prescriptions to maintain some level of daily activity. Physical play as a kid? That was out of reach. Gym class? I was sidelined. Instead, I buried myself in learning about diet, nutrition, and exercise, even though I couldn't physically do most of it. That led to periods of weight gain, especially between surgeries.

By sixteen, after my second surgery and a brief period of physical recovery, I worked hard to regain my strength using bodyweight exercises. Still, the pain never went away. And the prescriptions kept coming.

In 2011, I had a major heart attack. Once again, doctors suggested opiates instead of NSAIDs and Aleve. It felt like I was being pushed right back into a system I had already spent years trying to survive. The cycle of pharmaceutical dependency was relentless, and it wasn't helping me live. It was just helping me cope.

Then in 2015, everything started to change. I was at a breaking point, physically and emotionally. That's when I found Kratom.

Then, in 2017, things worsened. I was diagnosed with aggressive squamous cell carcinoma. I broke five ribs from coughing alone. I didn't even know they were broken until after I had surgery to remove the cancer. It was a dark, confusing time, and the pain was overwhelming.

In 2018, I was diagnosed with osteopenia. That's when the reality hit me: years of opioid use were catching up. I had to make a change.

And that's when Kratom became more than just a curiosity. It became a lifeline. I began replacing pharmaceuticals and alcohol with natural options. I leaned into herbal remedies, especially Kratom, and for the first time in decades, I felt like I could breathe. I could move. I could live.

Kratom has played a pivotal role in helping me reclaim my quality of life. It doesn't numb me out; it helps me stay clear, focused, and present. It gave me my life back in a way that prescriptions never did.

And I'm not alone. Millions of Americans rely on real, traditionally prepared Kratom to manage their lives in a safer, more natural way. That's why protecting access to genuine, unadulterated Kratom is so essential not just for me, but for every person out there who's trying to find a way through pain, through hardship, without turning to addictive or dangerous options.

Nature gave us this plant for a reason. It's not about getting high. It's about finding balance, peace, and strength when nothing else seems to work. I believe in this plant and in fighting to keep it safe, legal, and available for anyone who needs it.

Let's protect the authentic natural kratom because real lives depend on it.

Thank you for your time,

Christopher Deaney

From: [Stephen C. McIntosh](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Item 25-1568, November 20: OPPOSE on Prohibition of Kratom
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 3:20:47 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

My name is Stephen McIntosh.

I am writing to ask that you OPPOSE Agenda 25-1568, and remove it from the Consent Calendar. At minimum, this issue should be a matter for public comments, not approved in bulk. This law has the potential to harm many law abiding citizens who may pass through Fresno going to the national park or just passing through Route 99, but who would be criminals if they possess botanical kratom--for which there is no California statute declaring it illegal/controlled, nor is it Federally scheduled. This law is far extremely far reaching. At absolute minimum, it should not be illegal for adults to possess it, as possession is already managed by the state and federal Controlled Substances Acts, where kratom doesn't come close to the regulatory burden to actually schedule it.

I would ask that the county do not prohibit the sale or criminalize possession of kratom products and wait for the legislature to act in 2026. If the board must act, I do support regulation that limits use to adult consumers and sets limits for 7-OH-mitragynine levels similar to other state regulation programs (<2% by alkaloid fraction), It is also similar to the ordinance passed by Orange County (https://library.municode.com/ca/orange_county/ordinances/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=1375975), and similar to AB 1088 (Bains, M.D.)

I am a permanently disabled retiree from county service. I developed a life threatening cardiovascular condition, which in part contributes to anxiety and makes managing chronic pain more difficult. It eliminates a lot of treatment options. My pain was well managed until 2018 when my Rx pain medication was stopped against my will without warning or recourse. Unfortunately, this has occurred for many chronic pain patients whose doses have been reduced, stopped, replaced with products that do not work, pressured into pursuing other ineffective/more invasive treatments, having pharmacy stock-outs, or uncivil judgment by pharmacy or clinical staff.

Medical cannabis was not effective for my condition. It is not very functional and expensive.

I discovered kratom in 2018 when my medication was stopped. After reading extensively I made the informed decision to attempt use. I experienced complete elimination of withdrawal from prescription pain medication and substantial (but not complete) pain relief at doses suggested in harm reduction literature. I have maintained these doses, if even slightly decreased them, over use during the last 7 years. Kratom allows me to to regular life activities and the PT cardiology has recommended. It has also reduced the amount of time spent in the

ER/hospital for chest pain of ambiguous cause, which is expensive for our house and costs the health plan \$8000 minimum for a minimal cardiovascular workup even if the pain (primary symptom) is largely ignored in ER.

Like many Californians I have very few choices when it comes to health insurance. Our household income exceeds the level required for Medi-Cal or subsidized policies from Covered California. I am not old enough to qualify for Medicare. My only coverage option is what is provided through my wife's employer and only covers providers employed by the HMO. Going out of pocket to attempt to restart treatment under an independent pain management provider, where there is no guarantee they will offer an effective option is a non-starter financially, particularly on an ongoing basis.

No product is appropriate for all patients, OTC/supplements to Rx drugs or medical devices. I have been urged not to use NSAID products like Ibuprofen or Naproxen due to their cardiovascular effects. I cannot use implanted or external TENS or other electrical pain treatment devices due to having an AICD/pacemaker. People taking prescription drugs or with complex health conditions should very carefully decide which products to use, or not use, and take personal ownership of the outcomes (positive or negative) of choosing to use any product, including kratom.

I have been taking kratom for over 7 years now. I have had no adverse health effects, and even my life-threatening condition leading to disability has been stable. There have been no changes in kidney, liver, or cardiovascular workups. My implanted defibrillator has never fired and paces <1% of the time. I have not exceeded the dose I have set for myself and aside from pain relief experience no other effects of note. My use costs me around \$1.50 per day, an expense I can easily manage, especially if it reduces ER/hospital co-pays.

Again, I ask you to OPPOSE Agenda AA 25-1568 and wait for the legislature to act in 2026, or replace it with regulation law to limit it to adult consumers or further limit "7-OH" levels as many states and some counties do. Making kratom illegal to possess creates a patchwork of local laws that makes it impossible for a person trying to follow the law to move freely around the state without risking criminal penalties for merely possessing a product that helps them manage pain or manage other health conditions--some of which like me have few other options for pain management.

I hope that no member of this board has to experience what it is like to have intractable and extreme pain and to find that there is no mainstream treatment, or that their provider simply won't provide it because they do not like it, want to pursue higher cost treatments, or don't feel it is worth the bureaucratic headache.

Thank you,

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Stephen C. McIntosh, MBA
マッキントッシュスティーブン 経営学修士
Software Developer and Associate Instructor of CIS (Ret.)

From: [Ryan Haugen](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: My opposition to 25-1568 AA / November 20th 2025
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 4:00:03 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ryan Haugen. I'm a 36-year-old professional narrator and voice actor, and I'm writing to you as someone whose life has been transformed by a misunderstood and too-often maligned plant: kratom.

Before I discovered kratom, I struggled with debilitating anxiety, bouts of depression, and a destructive cycle of binge drinking. I had cycled on and off various anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants for years, with mixed results and unpleasant side effects. At my worst, I could only manage janitorial work. I was simply too overwhelmed to function in any field that required communication, creativity, or confidence.

Then I found kratom.

I first learned about it through online communities discussing natural options for managing anxiety and depression. I went in cautiously. I started low, paid attention to my body, and learned what worked for me. What I discovered was nothing short of life-altering. A small daily dose of whole leaf kratom, regardless of strain, helped calm the inner monologue that had haunted me for years. I could focus. I could breathe. I could engage.

And from that new emotional baseline, I was able to build something beautiful.

Today, I work successfully in a field that demands interpersonal collaboration and clear, creative thought. I narrate audiobooks. I voice characters in video games. I speak for a living—something that once seemed unthinkable to the anxious young man I used to be. I recently proposed to my partner of nine years. The life I've built - the emotional stability, the creative expression, the ability to connect - was all made possible because of this plant.

That's why I'm reaching out.

There is an alarming trend sweeping through state legislatures: efforts to ban or schedule kratom based on fear, misinformation, and a failure to distinguish between synthetic derivatives and the traditional whole leaf plant. These decisions often cite "kratom deaths" without acknowledging that the totality of such cases involve dangerous polydrug use, not kratom alone. Lawmakers and media outlets frequently conflate high-potency synthetic extracts (like 7-hydroxymitragynine concentrates) with the raw botanical leaf, which has been used safely for centuries.

I support regulation. In fact, I believe synthetic extracts should be restricted or banned. Further, individuals under 21 should not be able to purchase whole leaf kratom. I do not want dangerous products or black-market actors misrepresenting the plant I depend on. But banning

or scheduling whole leaf kratom is not the answer. It's not only ineffective; it's deeply harmful to people like me.

That's why I am urging you to support the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA).

This legislation offers a path forward that ensures consumer safety, restricts dangerous synthetics, and preserves access to a plant that has given thousands of Americans—including me—the chance to live productive, healthy lives. The KCPA would also provide a legal framework for responsible vendors, prevent adulteration, and support local business revenue, all while protecting vulnerable individuals from being forced back into pharmaceutical or self-destructive alternatives.

I pay close attention to news regarding this plant, which is why I am writing to you today. If kratom were to be Scheduled and thereby inaccessible to me, I don't say this lightly: it would unravel everything I've worked so hard to build. I would lose my footing, both professionally and personally. No prescription has ever helped me like kratom has, and many of them hurt far more than they helped.

Please, don't let fear and misunderstanding dictate this decision. Look at the human stories. Look at the science. And look at the future we can build with thoughtful, compassionate legislation like the KCPA.

Therefore, I **oppose** 25-1568 AA.

Thank you for your time, and for your service.

With sincerity and hope,
Ryan Haugen
rhnnarrates@gmail.com

Further reading:

WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence – Kratom Review (2021)

Link to Report Summary:

<https://www.who.int/news/item/18-11-2021-expert-committee-on-drug-dependence-recommendations>

Full PDF (Annex 1 - Kratom Review):

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/controlled-substances/44th-ecdd/kratom-annex-1.pdf>

Key finding: The WHO concluded that kratom should not be internationally scheduled, citing insufficient evidence of public health risk.

Journal of Psychoactive Drugs – Kratom's Effects and Usage Patterns

Title: Non-medical use of kratom: Patterns, perceived effects, and potential risks

Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02791072.2017.1360703>

Key point: Most users take kratom in moderate doses for therapeutic reasons, and few report harmful effects.

The Hill - op-ed on the importance of distinguishing whole leaf kratom from its synthetic variants and the benefits of safe regulation of kratom

<https://thehill.com/opinion/5352466-opioid-synthetic-opium-kratom-crisis/>

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From: noreply@granicusideas.com
To: [Clerk Agendas](#)
Subject: [BULK] New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 12:37:13 AM

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[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Nicholas Gr submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: Oppose making kratom unlawful. This plant can be restricted to those over the age of majority and the synthetic substances are not the same as kratom plants.

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From: [centaursag1214](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: 11/20/25 -Meeting Agenda: 2 – ID 25-1568 – AA
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 11:47:50 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Dear Board,

I am writing to strongly oppose any proposal to schedule Kratom or 7OH as a controlled substance or capping 7OH at 2%, please.

Kratom and 7OH are natural plant compounds that have helped me and because of these compounds, I am able to work full time and live a normal life free of pain and anxiety. They are a much safer alternative to street and prescription drugs, which are more dangerous/deadly and many people will be forced to turn to, if you deny them access. They are not a public health crisis. There are no documented deaths. Emergency Rooms and streets are not filled with kratom and more importantly 7OH overdoses.

Banning or capping Kratom, means banning or taking away 7OH as well, taking away options that thousands of citizens rely on to live happier, healthier, and productive lives.

I urge the board to please follow the science, not fear, and to ignore the misleading attacks by certain leading kratom industry groups specifically on 7OH. These individual are being misinformed by industry members seeking to gain market control, not consumer safety. They do not represent the experiences of many citizens who rely on Kratom and 7OH responsibly every day.

Instead of banning or capping, I strongly urge the board to support reasonable regulation, quality standards, and transparent labeling- approaches that protect consumers while preserving access to an important natural alternative.

Please follow the science, not fear and please do not ban or cap 7OH at 2%.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Melissa R

Chicago, IL

From: Joseph Harrington
To: Clerk: Nelson Esparza; Tyler Maxwell
Subject: [WARNING: UNSCANNABLE EXTRACTION FAILED]Regarding Meeting on Nov 20: ID 25-1568 | Testimony for the Public Record
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 12:17:18 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Beyond Prohibition: The Psychological and Societal Benefits of Safe and Regulated Access to Pure-Leaf Kratom

A Call for Psychological Insight and Compassionate Regulation

Introduction: A Second Chance, A Looming Threat

For over a decade, I existed in a silent prison, confined to a bed by a debilitating illness with no known cure. Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) stole my ability to live, to connect, to simply be. My life was a profound and unrelenting weakness, an existence devoid of even the simplest joys. Doctors offered no solutions, pharmaceuticals brought only side effects, and hope dwindled with each passing day. Then, a plant offered me a second chance: pure-leaf kratom. Today, I am completing my degree, working full-time, and spending quality time with my wife. I am not just living, but I am thriving as a student, an employee, a husband—a fully participating human being. This life, the one where I complete my degree and hold my wife's hand, is only possible thanks to pure-leaf kratom. The alternative is unthinkable: a lifetime of darkness spent in a bed. **I beg you, look beyond the controversy and see the life you have the power to save, the life you have the power to destroy.**

Now, that second chance is threatened by the specter of prohibition. As we move forward, I implore you, as honorable legislators, to consider the profound psychological ramifications of drug criminalization, rather than succumbing to the immediate, yet ultimately counterproductive, impulse to ban. Using both my personal experience and supporting evidence, this paper defines the distinction between pure-leaf kratom and its concentrated byproducts, demonstrates the systemic and psychological consequences of criminalization, presents the scientific evidence supporting kratom's safety profile, explores the psychological motivations behind prohibitive legislation, and presents compelling evidence from countries that have embraced decriminalization with positive outcomes. Our focus will be on the psychology of drug policy, not merely the plant itself, to advocate for a Kratom Consumer Protection Act that safeguards regulated access to pure-leaf kratom while restricting its concentrated byproducts.

My Personal Journey: From a Silent Prison to a Second Chance

My name is Joseph Harrington, and I suffer from a debilitating condition called Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.). While it is possible to search for the symptoms of this condition online, a list of diagnostic criteria cannot adequately convey the crushing reality of this disease. For over 10 years, I was confined to a bed for all hours of every single day. The profound and unrelenting weakness and fatigue made it impossible to perform even the simplest of tasks. I could not respond to a text message, speak a single word to my wife, let alone have a full conversation, watch a movie, read a book, lift a fork to my mouth, or even shower. To do anything besides lying there, feeling my life slip away, was impossible.

For the estimated 3.3 million people in the U.S. who have M.E., we can confidently say this disease has the lowest quality of life of any other disease. This is not hyperbole; it is a researched fact. One study found that the quality-of-life index for those with M.E. was substantially lower than for individuals with diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or even cancer (Falk Hvidberg et al., 2015). I wanted nothing more than to be able to work, to finish school, and to spend time with my wife—not as a lifeless body in a bed, but as a husband.

After countless doctor visits and innumerable pharmaceuticals, I was left with nothing more than debilitating fatigue, a host of side effects, and diminishing hope. The energy required just to have a telehealth appointment became so great that it was no longer possible, let alone to attend an in-person appointment. Yet, I could not give up. I was desperate to find a way to be there for my wife and to bring meaning back into my life. I could not stand being in the prison of this disease any longer. There had to be an answer, and for me, that answer was kratom. Please, I beg you, don't take away my only answer.

The decade I spent confined to a bed is a ghost of the past. Kratom didn't just change my life—it gave me a new one. Now, I am not just surviving; I am thriving: completing my degree, excelling in a full-time job, and sharing precious, quality time with my wife. Please, do not condemn me to return to that silent, life-stealing prison of an illness. **Do not take this hard-won freedom away.**

The Critical Distinction: Pure-Leaf Kratom vs. Adulterated Concentrates

I understand the concerns that surround kratom, but I ask you to look at the scientific evidence, not anecdotal sensationalized stories unfounded in science. A significant source of confusion and concern stems from the failure to distinguish between traditional, pure-leaf kratom and the dangerously concentrated, adulterated products that are often marketed under its name.

Pure-leaf kratom, in its native form, is seldom associated with adverse effects. The leaves of the *Mitragyna speciosa* tree contain a complex array of alkaloids that work in concert. The primary alkaloid, mitragynine, is accompanied by dozens of others. One of these, 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), is present in only trace amounts. **Pure-leaf kratom contains, at most, 0.1% of this compound.**

The more troublesome products found in some gas stations or smoke shops are something else entirely. These are highly concentrated extracts, chemically altered to contain unnaturally high levels of 7-OH. **Some of these products have been found to contain upwards of 500% more 7-OH than the natural leaf!** These are not kratom but are, unfortunately, often marketed as such. This distinction is paramount when discussing public safety.

Fatalities involving kratom are overwhelmingly associated with polysubstance use, consistently demonstrating that death is rarely attributable to kratom alone. **A state-level analysis of overdose deaths in Florida found that 96% of kratom-positive decedents had at least one other potentially harmful substance in their system** (Tampa Bay Times, 2023). This pattern is affirmed by national data from the CDC's SUDORS, which reported that polysubstance use was a factor in 87% of kratom-involved overdose deaths across 27 states (CDC, 2019). **This high rate of co-occurring substances strongly suggests that most kratom-associated fatalities result from dangerous synergistic toxicity.**

Creating a prohibition of all kratom products would be a grave mistake. It would fail to target the actual problem—unregulated, concentrated derivatives—and would drive the entire market underground. **This would eliminate any form of quality control, leading to an increase in dangerously concentrated and contaminated products, thereby exacerbating the very risks you seek to mitigate.** The existence of these concentrated byproducts is precisely the reason we need smart regulation to protect safe access to pure-leaf, unadulterated kratom.

How Criminalization Worsens Drug Problems: Systemic and Psychological Impacts

The intuitive desire to criminalize a substance perceived as dangerous, though motivated by a noble intent to protect public health, often produces a counterintuitive and detrimental effect: it intensifies drug-related issues. Prohibition consistently worsens existing issues due to systemic failures and harmful psychological mechanisms, including the following: fostering black markets; and imposing profound stigma, isolation, and significant obstacles to seeking help for individuals struggling with substance use. This environment of secrecy and fear often pushes individuals further into the shadows, making early intervention and effective treatment far more challenging (Boyum & Kleiman, 2005). The punitive approach also strains law enforcement resources, diverting them from addressing more serious crimes, and often disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, exacerbating social inequalities.

Incentivising Crime and Compromising Safety

Criminalization drives the drug market underground, shifting the production and distribution of a substance from regulated and observable channels to illicit, uncontrolled environments. **This lack of oversight creates a vacuum where quality control disappears, and dangerous adulterants become commonplace** (Reuter & Kleiman, 1986). For products like kratom, this is particularly problematic as the critical distinction between safe, pure-leaf kratom and dangerously concentrated byproducts (such as those with unnaturally high levels of 7-hydroxymitragynine) becomes blurred. Specifically, in an unregulated black market, consumers seeking the pure leaf are more likely to encounter potent, unstandardized, and potentially harmful derivatives. **The psychological consequence is increased risk for users who are forced to navigate a market rife with danger, ultimately leading to a more severe public health crisis.**

Similarly, the immense profits associated with illegal drug markets incentivize criminal organizations to engage in violence and organized crime to protect their territories and supply chains (Becker & Murphy, 1988). This introduces fear and instability into communities, intertwining the pursuit of a substance with exposure to dangerous environments and entrenching a cycle of risk and vulnerability.

Stigma, Isolation, and Barriers to Help

Moreover, criminalization fosters stigma and isolation. The act of making drug use a criminal offense psychologically labels individuals who use these substances as "criminals" or "deviants" (Room, 2006). This stigmatization creates a marked barrier to seeking help, as individuals fear legal repercussions or social condemnation. **This psychological burden can lead to a deepening of substance use, as isolation and shame often fuel further reliance on the drug** (Kelly et al., 2011). For individuals using a substance like pure-leaf kratom for medical relief, adding the psychological weight of being labeled a criminal would undoubtedly prevent them from seeking the very solution that gave them a second chance.

Nonetheless, criminalization also maintains and intensifies drug use through several insidious psychological traps. One such mechanism is the "forbidden fruit" effect, also known as reactance theory (Brehm, 1966). When a substance is prohibited, it can become more desirable simply because it is forbidden, increasing its allure for certain individuals. **Individuals predisposed to risk-taking or rebellion may be drawn to illegal substances as a way to assert their autonomy against perceived external control, making it more, rather than less, likely that they will experiment with the substance.**

Equally important, criminalization removes opportunities for "natural cessation" (Waldorf et al., 1991). Many individuals who use drugs eventually reduce or cease their use on their own due to natural processes like maturing or changing life circumstances. However, when use is criminalized, individuals become enmeshed in the criminal justice system. The psychological burden of arrests, convictions, and incarceration disrupts these natural pathways to desistance. **The system creates additional stressors and barriers, such as difficulty finding employment or housing, which perpetuate a cycle of drug use and criminal activity** (Moffitt, 1993).

The criminal justice system itself is a psychologically damaging environment. Exposure to the carceral system can lead to increased rates of mental health issues, trauma, and a sense of hopelessness (Haney, 2001), resulting in re-traumatization and further entrenchment in the very behaviors that policies aim to eliminate.

Furthermore, criminalization hinders the development of harm reduction strategies. Harm reduction, which is rooted in a pragmatic, public health-oriented psychological approach, seeks to minimize the negative consequences of drug use rather than eliminate it entirely (Marlatt, 1996). In environments where drugs are criminalized, these initiatives are viewed with suspicion, as they are often perceived as condoning drug use. This psychological resistance prevents the adoption of evidence-based interventions—such as regulated access to less harmful alternatives like pure-leaf kratom—that can save lives and improve public health outcomes.

Increased Opioid Overdose Mortality Rates Post Kratom Bans

Adding to the evidence that prohibition is counterproductive, a 2022 doctoral dissertation from the University of Louisville investigated the relationship between state-level kratom legislation and opioid overdose (OD) mortality (Blair, 2022). This public health study utilized a rigorous statistical method—interrupted time series analysis—to isolate the specific effect of kratom bans by controlling for the overall national increase in OD rates. The core finding reveals that state-level kratom bans were associated with a significant additional rise in opioid overdose mortality. **This suggests a dangerous substitution effect where, when the relatively safer alternative of pure-leaf kratom is banned, users switch back to highly dangerous illicit street opioids, which are increasingly contaminated with fentanyl.**

State data showed increases in overdose deaths above the expected trend post-ban, as follows (Blair, 2022):

- Vermont: 11% increase
- Arkansas: 10% increase
- Indiana: 9% increase
- Wisconsin: 3% increase

The combination of this data along with the systemic and psychological consequences of criminalization strongly supports the conclusion that prohibition hurts public health by removing a crucial tool for harm reduction, underscoring the necessity of implementing a Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA) to regulate quality and maintain safe access.

Scientific Evidence and User Demographics: A Profile of Responsible Use

Beyond my personal experience, a growing body of evidence shows that millions of Americans use kratom responsibly for legitimate health and wellness reasons. A 2020 survey of thousands of kratom users provides a clear profile of why and how this plant is being used, painting a picture that is starkly different from the one often portrayed by its detractors (Garcia-Romeu et al., 2020).

The survey highlights that the overwhelming majority of respondents use kratom for therapeutic purposes (Garcia-Romeu et al., 2020):

- Pain Management: 91% took kratom to manage chronic pain.
- Mental Health: 67% used it for anxiety, and 65% used it for depression.
- Harm Reduction: Perhaps most significantly, 41% took kratom to reduce or stop their consumption of opioids.

Kratom's Potential in Opioid Withdrawal Management

This final point warrants special attention, especially in the midst of a devastating opioid crisis. For the individuals who used kratom for this purpose, the results were remarkable (Garcia-Romeu et al., 2020):

- 87% claimed kratom was effective for managing opioid withdrawal symptoms.
-

80% claimed it was effective for mitigating opioid cravings.

- 86% claimed it was effective for the pain relief associated with opioid withdrawal.

Scientific Findings Challenge Abuse Narrative

Furthermore, the survey data directly addresses concerns about kratom's safety and potential for abuse. The findings suggest a favorable safety profile when used in its natural form (Garcia-Romeu et al., 2020):

- An overwhelming majority, 98% of respondents, did not meet the DSM-5 criteria for a kratom-related substance use disorder.
- A mere 10% of respondents experienced what they described as mild withdrawal symptoms from kratom.
- Less than 20% of users claimed any adverse effects, and among those who did, the effects were reported as mild.

General Safety Profile

Adding to this body of evidence, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) itself commissioned a pilot, dose-finding study to gain preliminary data on the effects of botanical kratom in humans. In this carefully controlled clinical study, participants were given single ascending doses of pure, encapsulated kratom leaf. The results were highly encouraging: at the doses tested (up to 12 grams), no serious adverse events occurred. The most common side effect was vomiting at higher doses. Overall, the preliminary conclusion was that the specific botanical kratom used in the study was well-tolerated. **Crucially, this FDA study did not find clear or dose-related effects on measures commonly associated with abuse potential, such as "drug liking"** (Reissig, 2024).

Research has specifically addressed the potential for severe health risks, particularly in comparison to classic opioids. The primary alkaloid, mitragynine (MTG), has been found to act as a partial agonist at the opioid receptor with respect to respiratory function (Henningfield et al., 2022). **This is a critical distinction, as it means that at all tested doses, mitragynine's maximal effects do not produce lethal respiratory depression, the leading cause of death in opioid overdose cases** (Henningfield et al., 2022). Interestingly, 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-HMG) also appears to be a partial agonist with respect to respiratory effects (Henningfield et al., 2022).

This data strongly indicates that kratom is primarily used as a natural alternative for pain, mental health conditions, and as a vital tool for opioid harm reduction. The user base is not one seeking a dangerous "high," but rather one seeking relief and a better quality of life. **Banning this plant would strip a demonstrably effective tool from countless individuals who are using it to manage their health responsibly.**

Global Consensus Against Prohibition

The scientific landscape surrounding kratom has evolved rapidly, with new findings consistently guiding policy (Henningfield et al., 2022). This growing evidence has prompted marked regulatory reversals by major health organizations. **For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) rescinded its scheduling recommendation to the DEA in 2018—an unprecedented move!**

Likewise, in 2021, the World Health Organization Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (WHO ECDD) reviewed the available data for international control and concluded there was not sufficient evidence to recommend scheduling (Henningfield et al., 2022). This unified scientific consensus suggests the data does not support a severe public health risk that would warrant restrictive controls.

This compelling safety profile underscores the need for regulation focused on product purity rather than prohibition. **The DEA's historical inclusion of kratom on its "drugs and chemicals of concern" list was based on reports of overdose deaths in Sweden involving a kratom product adulterated with lethal doses of O-desmethylnaloxone** (Henningfield et al., 2022). This highlights the true public health threat: not the pure leaf, but the unregulated, adulterated, or concentrated products sold without consumer safeguards.

The scientific community advocates for balanced regulation—such as the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA)—to ensure that consumer products are pure, unadulterated, and meet the standards applied to other food products (Henningfield et al., 2022).

The Psychology of Legislative Action: Why the Impulse to Criminalize?

Understanding why legislators often gravitate towards criminalization is crucial in advocating for more effective policies. The impulse to criminalize is often rooted in a complex interplay of psychological factors, including moral panic, risk aversion, the illusion of control, and the desire to appear "tough on drugs."

One significant factor is the phenomenon of "moral panic" (Cohen, 1972). When a substance or behavior is perceived as a threat to societal values or norms, a collective fear often emerges, amplified by media and political rhetoric. This panic can lead to an irrational overreaction, where the immediate demand for "doing something" overrides careful, evidence-based policymaking. The psychological comfort of a decisive, punitive action, even if ineffective, often outweighs the more nuanced and complex solutions. **In the case of kratom, the sensationalized stories surrounding its concentrated byproducts can easily trigger a moral panic, obscuring the scientific evidence and the experiences of responsible pure-leaf users.**

Another psychological driver is risk aversion. Legislators, like all individuals, are naturally inclined to minimize perceived risks. When faced with a novel or poorly understood substance, the default response can be to eliminate the risk entirely through prohibition (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). **This "better safe than sorry" mentality, while seemingly prudent, often fails to consider the unintended and often more severe consequences of criminalization itself.** The psychological desire to eradicate a perceived threat can overshadow the analysis of whether the proposed solution actually mitigates the overall harm.

Next, there is the "illusion of control" (Langer, 1975). Prohibition can create the psychological impression that the problem is being actively addressed and controlled, even when the reality is quite different. **By enacting a ban, legislators might feel they have exerted control over a complex issue, fulfilling a public expectation to act.** However, this sense of control is often illusory, as the drug market simply adapts and moves underground, making the substance less, rather than more, controllable. **The psychological satisfaction of having "done something" can blind policymakers to the actual efficacy of their actions.**

Lastly, the desire to project an image of strength and decisiveness can play a role. In the political arena, a tough stance on drugs can be perceived as a sign of leadership and a commitment to public safety. This psychological incentive can make it difficult for legislators to advocate for more nuanced, public health-oriented approaches, which might be perceived as "soft" on drugs. Overcoming these deeply ingrained psychological tendencies is essential for moving towards more effective and compassionate drug policies.

Lessons from Abroad: The Success of Decriminalization and Net Societal Benefits

If we are to effectively address drug-related issues, we must look beyond our borders and learn from the psychological and sociological outcomes of drug policies in other developed nations. Over the past two decades, a number of countries have shifted away from punitive prohibitionist models and toward evidence-based approaches centered on public health and harm reduction. The results have been tremendously beneficial, demonstrating a clear psychological and societal advantage to decriminalization over criminalization.

Case Study: Portugal

In 2001, Portugal took the bold step of decriminalizing the possession and consumption of all illicit drugs. After nearly 15 years, the data was clear: the country experienced no increase in overall drug use. **On the contrary, it saw a decrease in adolescent drug use, a sharp reduction in the incidence of HIV/AIDS, fewer drug-induced deaths, and a substantial increase in the number of people seeking and receiving addiction treatment** (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015).

The psychological impact of Portugal's policy shift is profound. By removing the threat of criminal prosecution, the stigma associated with drug use was significantly reduced. This fostered an environment where individuals felt psychologically safer to seek help, rather than hiding their struggles. The focus shifted from punishment to public health, creating a supportive framework for treatment and recovery (Hughes & Stevens, 2010). **This approach recognizes the psychological complexities of addiction, treating it as a health issue rather than a moral failing, which is crucial for successful intervention and long-term recovery.**

Case Study: The Czech Republic

Following Portugal's success, the Czech Republic formally adopted a law in 2009, decriminalizing drugs for personal use. Once again, the data suggests that this policy has yielded net societal benefits for the country (Public Health Ontario, 2022). Similar to Portugal, the psychological benefit has been a reduction in fear and stigma, leading to improved engagement with health services and a more effective public health response to drug use.

Case Study: The Netherlands

The Netherlands has a long-standing and well-known policy of not prosecuting the possession of a single dose of any drug for personal use, with neither civil nor criminal penalties applying below this limit ("Drug policy of the Netherlands," n.d.). The benefits of this pragmatic approach are evident: **the Netherlands boasts lower rates of addiction than the U.S. and much of Western Europe** (Saner, 2024). **The country also has significantly lower heroin overdose rates and a lower prevalence of injection drug use** (Saner, 2024).

The psychological underpinning of the Dutch model is one of pragmatism and harm reduction. By acknowledging the reality of drug use and focusing on minimizing its negative consequences, **the Netherlands has created an environment where individuals are less likely to experience the severe psychological and physical harms associated with unregulated drug markets** (Grund, Barends, & Stevens, 2011). This approach removes the psychological "forbidden fruit" allure and instead focuses on **education, prevention, and support, which are far more effective in managing drug use than prohibition.**

These international examples provide a clear and consistent lesson: criminalization and prohibition are failed policies. They do not reduce drug use or its associated harms. In countries with less punitive policies, there have not been increases in drug use, drug-related harm, or crime compared to countries with more punitive approaches (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015). In nations where drug use is decriminalized and comprehensive harm reduction services are available, HIV prevalence and transmission rates tend to drop sharply among people who use drugs (UNAIDS, 2020; Young In-Pursuit, n.d.). The psychological shift from punitive fear to supportive public health is demonstrably effective.

Conclusion:

A Call for Psychological Insight and Compassionate Regulation

The case against the prohibition of pure-leaf kratom is not merely economic or medical; it is fundamentally psychological. My personal story, from the prison of M.E. to a life reclaimed by pure-leaf kratom, is a testament to the profound human cost of neglecting effective solutions in favor of fear-driven policies. **This is not about condoning drug use; it is about recognizing the psychological realities of human behavior and implementing policies that genuinely minimize harm and support well-being.** To send me, and millions of Americans like me, back to our prisons by banning the very plant that offered us a second chance would be a tragic and illogical misstep.

We have explored the myriad ways criminalization exacerbates the drug problem: by driving markets underground, incentivizing crime, fostering stigma and isolation, and fueling violence. We have dissected the psychological motivations behind prohibitive legislation: from moral panic and risk aversion to the illusion of control. And we have laid bare the psychological traps that perpetuate drug use under criminalization, including the "forbidden fruit" effect, the removal of natural cessation pathways, and the traumatizing effects of the justice system.

Most importantly, we have learned from the enlightened approaches of nations like Portugal, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands. Their experiences provide irrefutable evidence that decriminalization, coupled with a focus on public health and harm reduction, yields demonstrably better societal outcomes, both psychologically and physically.

I implore you, as honorable legislators, to choose the path of psychological insight, evidence-based policy, and compassion. **Enact a Kratom Consumer Protection Act that safeguards regulated access to pure-leaf kratom, ensuring quality control and transparency, while simultaneously restricting the dangerous manufacturing and selling of its concentrated byproducts.** This approach, rooted in a deep understanding of human psychology, will protect the plant that gave me and so many others a second chance. Please, do not send us back to our prisons.

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Wendy M submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: The medical system failed me after a roll over accident while I was pregnant. My diagnosis was spondylolisthesis so my only options were pain medications or serious surgery. Looking back I wish I ™d never taken the first pill. I became physically dependent, with a FT job and a new child to care for. This went on for many years. It ™s a dangerous cycle that started when I was 36 and ended when I was 53. Natural Kratom allowed me to safely stop taking dangerous opioids and other medications permanently. I still have pain but I can tolerate it with Natural Kratom, light exercise, Advil and ice packs on the worst days. Natural Kratom is a life saver. I ™m living proof. Please focus on regulating the dangerous synthetic versions and access by minors. Natural Kratom is extremely safe!

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My name is Dijon Evans. I am a California resident who is very concerned about the loss of kratom in California. My journey with pain is one marked by 240+ surgeries, complications & a constant battle against my own body for the last 46 years. Diagnosed with complex regional pain syndrome, trigeminal neuralgia, multiple organ failure, and a myriad of other conditions, I faced a bleak prognosis. All of these health problems were compounded by the mental & physical challenges from the loss of a limb when I was younger due to a short leg cast that was put on too tight. It killed the nerves & cut off the circulation. I have been legally dead several times & knocking on death's door even more! The opioid epidemic further complicated my plight. Stripped of access to effective pain management, I found myself teetering on the edge of despair, contemplating ending my own suffering. It was in this darkest moment that kratom entered my life. After research & consultation with medical professionals, family & friends, I decided to give kratom a try as a last resort. With nothing to lose & everything to gain, I ordered pure kratom leaf powder from a reputable source. Skeptical yet desperate, I awaited its arrival. When the package finally arrived, I was moments away from carrying out my final decision. But something inside me urged me to try kratom first. Within minutes of consumption, I felt a shift — a glimmer of relief amidst the relentless pain. Kratom didn't erase my suffering, but it made it bearable, offering me a reprieve I had long thought impossible. Beyond pain relief, kratom has bestowed upon me something equally precious: Hope. It has allowed me to reclaim aspects of life I once thought lost, from spending time with loved ones to engaging in social interactions online. Kratom not only alleviated my physical agony, it also restored my sense of purpose & dignity. Despite being told I wouldn't live past 30, here I am at 62, a testament to sheer determination & the resilience of the human spirit. California is in a position to help countless Californians like me. We need regulations for the kratom industry in California. Regulations for packaging / labeling requirements and age restrictions for purchase. Regulations for whole leaf, unadulterated kratom & its extracts, & prohibit dangerous synthetic isolates. This is important because not all kratom products are alike: Some are simple leaf kratom, which has been used for centuries. Kratom has literally saved my life and given me the HOPE back that I had lost. It has given me my family- a beautiful daughter & 3 grandchildren, one of which has recently gotten married and is going to make me a Great grandma any day now- a miracle that I never imagined I would ever see, if not for kratom, I wouldn't see it! Please don't ban kratom products!

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!

Dijon Evans

Sent from my Metro by T-Mobile 5G Device

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Ben Swanson submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: My name Is Ben Swanson, I am a happily married father of 2. I am writing to you today to request that you do not ban kratom. A ban on Kratom will deprive 1000♦€™s of great people of access to a natural, safe plant, from the coffee family, whose benefits help millions of Americans live better every Day. The Kratom plant is not a drug. Kratom is not an opiate. Kratom is not a synthetic substance. Though kratom is relatively new to the United States, Kratom has been used safely for 100♦€™s of years in South East Asia as a natural medicine. Kratom in its natural form is a safe herbal tea whose users claim energy, pain relief, depression and anxiety relief and helps users curb addiction to Alcohol and opiates. According To Dr Jack Henningfield, PHD Kratoms♦€™ potential for abuse is no more than Nutmeg, Hops, St John♦€™s Wort. Please do not ban this safe plant.

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Misty Brown submitted a new eComment.

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Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: 7OH IS NOT KRATOM! In April 2019, I was dismissed from pain management after failing a required pill count. I was 11 pills short, and my usual drug dealers didn't have the pink oxy 10s I needed. Cut off from prescriptions, I turned to the streets in desperation and eventually slipped into cocaine use while searching for another doctor. Then, in June 2019, while suffering through cocaine withdrawal, I stumbled upon the documentary A Leaf of Faith. That single moment changed the course of my life. The very next day, I began my journey with whole-leaf Kratom, not synthetic 7OH. Kratom quieted the relentless cravings, the constant voice whispering, one more pill, one more snort, one more escape. For the first time in over a decade, I felt peace. Kratom gave me the space and clarity to confront the deeper reasons behind my addiction and to rebuild my life from the ground up. I have not returned to pain management in over six and a half years. Today, I am a thriving mother, a proud first-time grandmother, a functioning member of society, and a tax-paying citizen. Most importantly, I am no longer a burden to my children. I am an example of hope and healing. I will forever be grateful that I found safe, lab-tested, whole-leaf Kratom. Now, I share my story, knowledge, and the science behind it to help others facing addiction, chronic pain, anxiety, and depression.

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Jeremy Xiong submitted a new eComment.

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Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: I saw this on the news tonight. You guys do a lot of weird things but I didn't know the drug was for sale everywhere. I support ban the kratom. I don't want my kids to go to the store and buy the drugs legal.

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steven Kruckenberg submitted a new eComment.

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Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: Fro age restrictions but not banning. And keep 7oh below 2% ingredients by volume

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Steven Kruckenberg submitted a new eComment.

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Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: I'm for age restrictions but not banning. And keep 7oh below 2% ingredients by volume

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Andrea Roman submitted a new eComment.

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Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: I oppose

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Joe Utah submitted a new eComment.

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Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: I do not reside in your state but I fear if your state, city, county passes any prohibition, other states, citys, counties may continue to follow. I currently use kratom for pain management. I personally feel it is a safer alternative to prescribed medicines that deal with pain, again i know I do not reside in your state but I fear if the path to restricting or banning this alternative continues I and many others would unfairly be impacted. Reject prohibition and consider regulation. Thank you

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Jean Penberthy submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: My brother started using kratom products and it ruined his life. Hes addicted to these products and he keeps telling me its herbal but Im watching him throw his life away. I worry he will take too much one day. Feel Free is too accessible in stores and he drinks 3-4 each day with some tablets that also have it in them. I was reading these other comments and they are all saying its a miracle drug. The truth is that kratom is completely unregulated and dangerous. Keeping kratom accessible in any form like below 2% like some people say is basically trusting a store owner's word. I dont trust these store owners because they know the 7OH is bad and they sell it anyway. We are supposed to trust store owners to keep the 7OH level below 2% when they have been selling this lethal product to people like my brother for years? I dont buy it. There is no government agency watching this stuff so it needs to be banned. This stuff is poison and its about time politicians did something about it even if it is local only. Ive ready studies and done research on my own and kratom is too dangerous to sell at a gas station. Its about time Fresno did something about this. I dont know about my brother but if this law can save someone else from getting hooked on what is basically legal and accessible opioids then its worth it. I urge you to pass this law.

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From: noreply@granicusideas.com
To: [Clerk Agendas](#)
Subject: [BULK] New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting
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External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Chris Penna submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: I am a 43-year-old business owner who suffers from chronic pain due to a car accident when I was younger. Kratom got me off opiates and has allowed me to live a normal and productive life for the past ten years. In reading some of the comments in support, it is clear that kratom is being confused with 7Oh. These are not the same thing, and grouping them together creates unnecessary fear and misinformation. Kratom is one of the few things in this country that genuinely helps reduce dependence on opioids. Instead of recognizing its value, it continues to be misunderstood and targeted. Kratom leaf is a natural plant, and unlike opiates, it does not cause respiratory depression, which means you cannot overdose on it the way you can with opiates. If it is banned, I will be forced to search for other ways to manage my pain, and those alternatives are far more dangerous and debilitating. I support regulation and believe it should be limited to responsible adults age 21 and up, just like alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana. This is probably the first time you have heard of kratom, but your decision here greatly affects the lives of chronic pain sufferers who rely on it in this county. If nothing else, please table this and contact the American Kratom Association so you can review accurate information before making a decision. I strongly oppose this ordinance.

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To: [Clerk Agendas](#)
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[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Jennifer Gillis submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: 19 years ago I was diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis. This came with not only many physical limitations but I became a life long chronic pain patient. For 13 years I utilized various pain management options including prescription medications to help me be able to function. Due to circumstances like the DEA cutbacks and changing regulations I was eventually unable to get my pain meds that I had relied upon for so long. In May 2019 I found whole leaf kratom and have been a responsible kratom consumer for the last 6 years. I can get out of bed, run errands, attend school functions, and even with my physical limitations, live a somewhat normal life because my pain is being managed. I know there are many others who have a similar story to mine. Whole leaf Kratom has been a lifeline for people like me who just want to live a better quality of life and we should have the freedom to choose kratom to do that. Whole-leaf kratom, when properly tested and labeled, has helped countless people like myself have a better quality of life. What puts consumers at risk are the 7-OH products being marketed as kratom, which very different from the natural plant. I am asking you to support regulations instead of banning kratom. This protects public health while preserving the freedom of choice for responsible adults.

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Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 5:06:40 AM

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[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Dugan Farrell submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: My name is Dugan Farrell and I have been a kratom consumer for close to a decade and in that time I have managed to maintain my sobriety from an opioid addiction, advance my career, meet and marry the love of my life, and become closer than ever to my parents. Kratom has been an instrumental part of my life's journey, and I have first hand seen it benefit friends and family along the way. Millions of California residents rely on this plant to help them manage conditions ranging from chronic pain, addiction, and treatment resistant mood disorders. California needs sensible regulation like age restrictions and requirements for third party lab testing to protect its kratom consumers, not to punish consumers and compromise their access to this plant. Cannabis is a great example of a plant that was demonized and criminalized for decades which had severe negative consequences for its users and for our society as a whole. Criminalizing the kratom industry and its users will do nothing but harm our society and push people towards illegal street drugs to manage their chronic pain, opioid addictions, and countless other conditions that they use Kratom to manage. Please advocate for people like me and my wife whose lives have greatly benefited from this amazing plant and reign in the CA DPH from overstepping and attacking those lawfully manufacturing and selling safe Kratom products in California.

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From: noreply@granicusideas.com
To: [Clerk Agendas](#)
Subject: [BULK] New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:33:31 AM

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[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Nathan Ramirez submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: Kratom is not a supplement that the council should be worried about, they should be putting their time and attention to other harmful ingredients and products that have long-term effects. I operate the best health and coaching service in Fresno, Ca and have helped hundreds of individuals improve their house over the course of the past five years. This product is much more beneficial than any form of caffeine or stimulant that is on the market

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From: noreply@granicusideas.com
To: [Clerk Agendas](#)
Subject: [BULK] New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:40:50 AM

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[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Chase Brock submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: Agenda Item 2 “ ID 25-1568 ” Neutral I am selecting Neutral because I support reasonable regulation of synthetic and adulterated kratom products, but I oppose any language that would restrict or ban natural kratom leaf. My name is Chase Brock. I’m a high school special education teacher, ADHD coach, ocean lifeguard, and outdoor educator. I also have an autoimmune disorder that causes severe fatigue, pain, and digestive issues. There are no pharmaceutical options for my condition, and natural kratom leaf has been the only thing that allows me to work, stay independent, and contribute to my community. Before kratom, I was essentially disabled. Natural kratom leaf is part of the coffee family and is not the public safety risk. The danger comes from synthetic or adulterated products, which absolutely should be regulated and enforced against. Fresno County already recognized this difference and moved toward removing natural kratom from their ban. This is a balanced, common-sense approach that protects public safety without pushing responsible adults toward unsafe black-market alternatives or harming small businesses. Please focus regulation on synthetic and adulterated products and preserve access to natural kratom leaf for responsible adults. Thank you.

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From: [Stephanie Calzada](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Agenda item: 2. ID 25-1568 – AA BILL *11/20/3025
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 6:41:38 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Hello,

I understand that you will soon be considering potential changes to the legal status of Kratom in Fresno County. I am writing to respectfully urge you to prioritize regulating Kratom rather than banning it, as well as differentiating naturally sourced Kratom from synthetic products.

As someone who struggled with opioid dependency for more than 12 years, I can say with certainty that Kratom has been life-changing. It has helped me remain clean and sober for the past 7 years. Unlike opioids, natural Kratom has not caused me any harmful health effects, and it has provided me with a safe alternative that supports my recovery.

I know many other residents share similar experiences and rely on Kratom to maintain their well-being. I sincerely hope that our voices are taken into account as you discuss the path forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Calzada
(661) 805-3094

From: noreply@granicusideas.com
To: [Clerk Agendas](#)
Subject: [BULK] New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:56:34 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

[City of Fresno](#)

New eComment for City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Ryan Haugen submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council on 2025-11-20 9:00 AM - Regular Meeting

Item: 2.-AA. ID 25-1568 BILL - (For Introduction) Adding Chapter 10 of Article 28 of the Fresno Municipal Code, relating to the regulation of the sale and distribution of kratom products within the City limits

eComment: I am urging you to support the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA). This legislation offers a path forward that ensures consumer safety, restricts dangerous synthetics, and preserves access to a plant that has given thousands of Americans - including me - the chance to live productive, healthy lives. The KCPA would also provide a legal framework for responsible vendors, prevent adulteration, and support local business revenue, all while protecting vulnerable individuals from being forced back into pharmaceutical or self-destructive alternatives. I pay close attention to news regarding this plant, which is why I am writing to you today. If kratom were to be Scheduled/banned and thereby inaccessible to me, I don't say this lightly: it would unravel everything I've worked so hard to build. I would lose my footing, both professionally and personally. No prescription has ever helped me like kratom has, and many of them hurt far more than they helped. Please, don't let fear and misunderstanding dictate this decision. Look at the human stories. Look at the science. And look at the future we can build with thoughtful, compassionate legislation like the KCPA. Therefore, I am in opposition to ID 25-1568. Thank you for your time, and for your service.

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From: [BA X](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Agenda item 2 - ID 25 1568 - AA
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 11:22:28 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

- Agenda Date: Nov. 20, 2025
- Agenda Item: Item 2 - ID 25-1568 - AA

Hello,

I oppose this ordinance and would like my email added to the record.

Kratom has been a life savor to me and my boyfriend. We are both in recovery for addiction and Kratom has safely kept us away from our drug of choice (OxyContin, fentanyl) for many years, something we have never been able to do before. We have been able to become productive members of society with the help of Kratom/7-OH, because it helps immensely with our mental health while completely taking away our cravings. This ban would result in the deaths of many suffering from substance use disorder, as Kratom keeps them safely away from fentanyl and other opioids. Kratom also supports people going through withdrawal by taking away excruciating side effects, it would be a shame to take away this aid for people who do not have access to suboxone and want to be sober.

Thank you for your time.

From: [Rex Utah](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Item 2 ID 25-1568 AA 11/20/2025
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 11:37:04 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Item 2-ID 25-1568 AA
Nov 20, 2025

I Oppose the ordinance and would like my email added to the record.

I do not reside in your state but I fear if your state, city, county passes any prohibition, other states, cities, counties may follow. I currently use kratom for pain management. I personally feel it is a safer alternative to prescribed medicines that deal with pain, again i know I do not reside in your state but I fear if the path to restricting or banning this alternative continues I and many others would unfairly be impacted. I and many others benefit from kratom/7OH
Reject prohibition and consider regulation.

I Oppose the ordinance and would like my email added to the record.

Jose Candela Jr.

Thank you

From: [Denise Geltman](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: AGENDA ITEM 2 - ID 25-1568. - AA BILL KRATOM BAN
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 11:47:07 PM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Dear Fresno City Council Members:

My name is Denise Geltman and I have been taking NATURAL LEAF KRATOM for the past 9 years.

I am 61 years old and have chronic severe nerve damage which causes severe pain and spasms in my intestines, legs and feet, IBS, Fibromyalgia and Migraines.

Kratom changed my whole life for the better. Before Kratom I existed in constant pain. Kratom has enabled me to hold down a very part time job for the past 9 years. I'm actually contributing to my family, community and the economy instead of crying in my bed all day and watching my life pass me by,

Please do not ban NATURAL LEAF KRATOM. It helps millions of Americans. It is a very important tool in the chronic pain toolbox.

In fact, you may not know this, but last November 2024, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, formerly of the FDA, went directly to the WHO/UN and asked them to ban Natural Leaf Kratom and they said NO because it helps too many people.

Instead I humbly suggest you distinguish NATURAL LEAF KRATOM as a separate entity from the 7OH products, just like Makary of the FDA did in July.

And Ban 7OH products.

I have ALWAYS been against 7OH products. I find them extremely dangerous. Especially because they can cause respiratory depression, which the US Government's own Patent on Kratom alkaloids said Natural Leaf Kratom does NOT cause.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request. I really appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Denise Geltman

denisegeltman@gmail.com

From: [Randall Brooks](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Proposed ban on kratom & 7oh
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 1:43:53 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

I am a 65yr old man who suffers from chronic pain due to several orthopedic conditions. I have successfully used 7oh to treat the chronic pain related to these conditions for over a year.

Before I started using it I was stuck on the couch, unable to get up and do the work needed to tend to my home and property. My home was deteriorating and my property was overgrown. After I started using it I was able to get up and correct these problems and continue with my activities of daily living.

Please don't ban these products. Perhaps consider restricting their sale to people over 21.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration in this matter.

Randall Brooks

From: [Dylan Baker](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Oppose Nov. 20 Kratom Ban agenda item
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 2:35:18 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Hello I am writing to you in regards to:

—Agenda Date: Nov. 20, 2025. •Agenda Item: Item 2 – ID 25-1568 – AA

Concerning the banning of Kratom in Fresno:

- I oppose this ordinance in Fresno to ban Kratom. I have personally been a victim of the past pharmaceutical opiate epidemic as of 10 years ago in 2026. I was lucky enough to find Kratom extracts and products which allowed me to taper off successfully and just as important safely. Kratom is a very safe medicine. I posted a link about Kratom and 7oh for scientific information at the bottom.

I want to let you know I have been taking Kratom for 10 years and I am now happy with my own house, the same job for 9 years, a dog, and a normal life. Something I never could have imagined 10 years ago.

I also personally know many pain management/past opiate addicts and/or patients who have successfully quit their medication's for a safer healthier Kratom substitute or to taper off both substances completely. It CAN BE A CURE for the addicted and discarded members of society.

Banning kratom and 7oh without looking at the science and how it will likely increase opiate addiction and deaths. I want your email added to the record. I would love to see people's life's saved and I would love to see Fresno keep Kratom and 7oh safe and available. There is zero to very deaths deaths from kratom/7oh except in cases of polydrug abuse. Alcohol is a much bigger issue and cause of death to the public and widely available.

Please I beg you, give the people of Fresno a chance to prove your suspicions wrong and let me be part of that proof that it helps people. There is NOT a Kratom or 7oh epidemic of deaths. Science has proven by HART studies have provided information that it has a strong safety profile and minimal toxicity when at high doses.

Source:

<https://hartsupporter.com/hart-urges-politicians-and-regulators-to-follow-the-science-around-7oh/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20FDA%20data%20is%20clear,metabolism%20in%20the%20human%20body.>

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I please hope you oppose the Kratom ban that has saved so many lives including my own and my friends.

Sincerely and genuinely,
Dylan B.

From: [Jessica Johnston](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Warning about 7oh banning
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 3:50:14 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Hi! My name is Jessica Johnston. I am someone who is an advocate for 7hydroxymitragynine as a medicine that should be legally available as well as someone who has seen the medicinal power & relief it can bring to someone. I bring this topic forward to you today to remind you that there are many people who have used this to get away from other habits or more severe ones that can end their lives quickly &/or ruin their health & again permanently ruin their lives with their usage of harsher substances.

Despite what the disinformation is constantly saying about this, this isn't as dangerous as that may make it sound. This medicine is just as safe as coffee, safer than alcohol & safer than cigarettes. This has helped many people who were past users of heroin or fentanyl get off of that & move on with their lives & piece it back together. This has helped veterans which the VA has abruptly decided to take them off their painkilling medications because.. i guess when soldiers come back from war pain suddenly goes away? It doesn't, quite obviously i shouldn't have to say that but, it seems like America's "opiate problem" is turning into "lets take people who need these meds off their meds while RFK jr gets to keep his."

This helps pain fantastically, better than most other things can. You will ruin many lives by banning it in your area & the states that have been trying to ban this are ruining lives daily. Ruining the lives of veterans who have become disabled or partially disabled by being in war then when they got taken off their meds were glad that there was an alternative right there online. There are one of 2 directions they go in, they know about this & utilize the benefits of it after being taken off their meds or running out or they turn to the streets for pain relief.. you will be ruining the lives of disabled people who are constantly neglected by the healthcare system because let's face it.

America's healthcare system is broken & does not work & most average every day Americans are suffering from it & lots of people who are disabled with chronic spells of nerve pain are looked at, given a bottle of gabapentin (doesn't work enough by the way & is also more unsafe than this is.) & ignored when they mention side effects from it.

People who are younger & dealing with intense chronic pain are always neglected by the system because we must be lying about it for some reason so we stay at home with it & hide. & we try to go & build our lives & survive & get jobs but if we are going through sharp shooting pains in our body still while on the meds they prescribe that do not help pain enough, you can't just "push through it" without your body making you pay for it. Without a medicine for relief, you are basically left in a corner to writhe in pain every day. We do not have something for tooth aches that works as well as 7hydroxy does. People can't afford healthcare & you are thinking of banning a route those people can take..

We need lawmakers to understand, you are worsening the fentanyl problem by banning this. You aren't going to better anyone in this country by banning this, you aren't saving anybody.

You are hurting more americans than you can possibly imagine doing things like this. We are watching an authoritarian regime takeover healthcare, take over the rules. Take over the court systems & disabled people need a route to destress/get relief & comfort in our bodies that isn't jeopardized constantly because people want to make money off of innocent peoples heads instead of protecting americans. When the people constantly scream that they are for the legalization of plants & that they dislike prohibition immensely, they mean it. It does nothing but imprison innocent people who have done nothing but have something or use something. Not only that, Alcohol has killed hundreds of thousands of americans every single year. 7hydroxy? Theres maybe 40 incidents & most of them arent 7hydroxy on its own. They were doing 7hydroxy & other things with it.

I promise you, most people who are using this are NOT doing things like that in the above paragraph. We are using it to piece our lives back together, to get waves of calm in a sea of chaos. To relieve sharp nerve pain/teeth aches when the pain becomes all over/punchy & becomes overstimulating to the nervous system & continuously ruining so many hours of the days in their day to days. We are only using 7hydroxy & plants & their alkaloids. We are using it SO WE CAN FUNCTION & or never want or desire other heavier things again.

Its a shame that they are trying to push suboxone on chronic pain patients & it destroys peoples teeth so it creates more pain by destroying peoples teeth. Americans need to be able to keep some of their freedom of choices to stay sane during a time where congress & the GOP have become lawless.. we are all very heart broken seeing whats going on at the white house & the hemp ban, the SNAP bans & many other executive dysfunctions happening there. Think about what you are doing during a time like this, think about the layers of americans whose lives are truly falling apart right now due to the way the country is trampling on their freedoms. As a trans person, this is the only thing balancing my daily dysphoria & daily nerve pain out. I wish we werent being hyper demonized right now. My community is suffering for it & so am i..

People just want their freedom to choose to using this which is safer than suboxone (which also ruins lives), safer than alcohol (which ruins lives), safer than nicotine (which also ruins lives), safer than methadone (which also ruins lives). Its been proven & can be traced throughout the country that fentanyl overdoses die down where 7hydroxmitragynine sales are up. Its a miracle that its as useful & available as it is bc theres nothing like it. It is the most manageable pain relieving thing i have ever used & i would even say its more manageable than any of the pain medicines i was placed on after both my rotator cuffs were permanently dislocated. I dont have the money to get a surgery.

This should be an available alternative for people who go looking for it online bc its useful for many things. Lives will fall apart & be ruined with the banning of this. Fentanyl overdoses will spike up again. Lawmakers need to seriously listen to the american people right now instead of the big pharma lobbies. They are known to ruin lives & you can find people both left & right who are using this. It needs to be a respected alternative that stays legal. It saves lives..

From: [Jacob Pryor](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Kratom ban
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 4:17:36 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Good morning,

I'm writing to ask that you please do further research into how many people lives are made better with kratom and 7 hydroxymitragynine, myself included, before voting. People with chronic pain need safe pain relief without relying on dangerous pharma opiates. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Jacob Pryor

From: [jacob.rasta](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Item 2-ID25-1568-AA
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 4:37:32 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

- Agenda Date: Nov. 20, 2025
- Agenda Item: Item 2 – ID 25-1568 – AA

I oppose this ordinance and would like my email added to the record.

Kratom and 7oh have helped my life greatly in a healthcare system that treats pain patients like addicts and criminals. Kratom and 7oh are americans last real hope for any type of pain relief in this country. We didnt ask to be in pain 24/7 in our daily lives, of we could make it go away best believe we would in a heartbeat. Because of 7oh and kratom im able to live a normal life, im able to work and play with my children, im able to go hiking and do physical activities. All things that I would otherwise be unable to participate in. These tools have given me my life back.

Thank you for giving me a chance for my voice to be heard.

From: [Chase Brock](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 2 – ID 25-1568 - Agenda date: November 20th, 2025
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:30:08 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

Please Support Regulation, Not a Ban on Natural Kratom

Hello,

My name is Chase Brock, and I live in Imperial Beach, CA. I am a high school special education teacher, ADHD coach, ocean lifeguard, and outdoor educator. I also have an autoimmune disorder that causes severe fatigue, pain, and digestive issues.

Before I found natural kratom leaf, I was unable to work and was losing my ability to support myself. There are no pharmaceutical options for my condition, and kratom leaf has been the only tool that allows me to function, stay employed, and contribute to my community. It gave me my independence back.

I'm writing about **Agenda Item 2 – ID 25-1568 (AA Bill)** for the **November 20th, 2025** meeting. I respectfully ask the Council to **remove natural kratom leaf from any ban language** and instead support **reasonable, common-sense regulation**.

Natural kratom leaf is simply part of the coffee family. What poses a real danger—and what absolutely should be restricted—are **synthetic or adulterated products** misrepresented as kratom. Those products threaten public safety and create black-market problems.

Fresno County just acknowledged this distinction and moved toward removing natural kratom leaf from their ban. This is a **balanced, responsible approach** that protects residents while avoiding unnecessary government overreach into the lives of responsible adults.

A full ban on natural kratom would:

- Harm law-abiding adults who rely on it for legitimate health needs
- Push demand into the black market, making enforcement harder
- Hurt small businesses that follow the rules
- Reduce personal responsibility by taking away the safer option people are already using successfully

Regulation is the safer option. It keeps dangerous products out of the community, supports enforcement, and still protects access to natural kratom leaf for adults who use it responsibly—like me.

I ask that Fresno follow the County's lead and adopt a **measured, enforcement-focused**

approach that targets the real risks (synthetics and adulterated products) without punishing responsible consumers.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to public safety and practical regulation.

Sincerely,

Chase Brock

Imperial Beach, CA

chase brock, M.S.Ed.

Surf The Reaction | ADHD Coaching, Mindfulness Training

Sea Tree Design | Photography, SEO, Web Design

-

ADHD Coach

-

Digital Marketing/SEO Specialist for Mental Health services

-

Photographer

-

Yoga / Meditation Teacher

-

Special Education Teacher

Text: 503.770.0772



| [@chasebrockyoga](#) |

From: [Ryan Haugen](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Opposition to ID-25-1568 AA
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:58:52 AM

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments

- Agenda Date: Nov. 20, 2025
- Agenda Item: Item 2 – ID 25-1568 – AA

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ryan Haugen. I'm a 36-year-old professional narrator and voice actor, and I'm writing to you as someone whose life has been transformed by a misunderstood and too-often maligned plant: kratom. I am in opposition to ID-25-1568-AA and encourage the adoption of the KCPA statewide in California.

Before I discovered kratom, I struggled with debilitating anxiety, bouts of depression, and a destructive cycle of binge drinking. I had cycled on and off various anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants for years, with mixed results and unpleasant side effects. At my worst, I could only manage janitorial work. I was simply too overwhelmed to function in any field that required communication, creativity, or confidence.

Then I found kratom.

I first learned about it through online communities discussing natural options for managing anxiety and depression. I went in cautiously. I started low, paid attention to my body, and learned what worked for me. What I discovered was nothing short of life-altering. A small daily dose of whole leaf kratom, regardless of strain, helped calm the inner monologue that had haunted me for years. I could focus. I could breathe. I could engage.

And from that new emotional baseline, I was able to build something beautiful.

Today, I work successfully in a field that demands interpersonal collaboration and clear, creative thought. I narrate audiobooks. I voice characters in video games. I speak for a living—something that once seemed unthinkable to the anxious young man I used to be. I recently proposed to my partner of nine years. The life I've built - the emotional stability, the creative expression, the ability to connect - was all made possible because of this plant.

That's why I'm reaching out.

There is an alarming trend sweeping through state legislatures: efforts to ban or schedule kratom based on fear, misinformation, and a failure to distinguish between synthetic derivatives and the traditional whole leaf plant. These decisions often cite "kratom deaths" without acknowledging that the totality of such cases involve dangerous polydrug use, not kratom alone. Lawmakers and media outlets frequently conflate high-potency synthetic extracts (like 7-hydroxymitragynine concentrates) with the raw botanical leaf, which has been

used safely for centuries.

I support regulation. In fact, I believe synthetic extracts should be restricted or banned. Further, individuals under 21 should not be able to purchase whole leaf kratom. I do not want dangerous products or black-market actors misrepresenting the plant I depend on. But banning or scheduling whole leaf kratom is not the answer. It's not only ineffective; it's deeply harmful to people like me.

That's why I am urging you to support the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA).

This legislation offers a path forward that ensures consumer safety, restricts dangerous synthetics, and preserves access to a plant that has given thousands of Americans - including me - the chance to live productive, healthy lives. The KCPA would also provide a legal framework for responsible vendors, prevent adulteration, and support local business revenue, all while protecting vulnerable individuals from being forced back into pharmaceutical or self-destructive alternatives.

I pay close attention to news regarding this plant, which is why I am writing to you today. If kratom were to be Scheduled/banned and thereby inaccessible to me, I don't say this lightly: it would unravel everything I've worked so hard to build. I would lose my footing, both professionally and personally. No prescription has ever helped me like kratom has, and many of them hurt far more than they helped.

Please, don't let fear and misunderstanding dictate this decision. Look at the human stories. Look at the science. And look at the future we can build with thoughtful, compassionate legislation like the KCPA.

Thank you for your time, and for your service.

With sincerity and hope,
Ryan Haugen
rhnnarrates@gmail.com

Further reading:

WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence – Kratom Review (2021)

Link to Report Summary:
<https://www.who.int/news/item/18-11-2021-expert-committee-on-drug-dependence-recommendations>

Full PDF (Annex 1 - Kratom Review):
<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/controlled-substances/44th-ecdd/kratom-annex-1.pdf>

Key finding: The WHO concluded that kratom should not be internationally scheduled, citing insufficient evidence of public health risk.

Journal of Psychoactive Drugs – Kratom's Effects and Usage Patterns

Title: Non-medical use of kratom: Patterns, perceived effects, and potential risks

Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02791072.2017.1360703>

Key point: Most users take kratom in moderate doses for therapeutic reasons, and few report harmful effects.

The Hill - op-ed on the importance of distinguishing whole leaf kratom from its synthetic variants and the benefits of safe regulation of kratom

<https://thehill.com/opinion/5352466-opioid-synthetic-opium-kratom-crisis/>

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Ryan Haugen
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From: loraromney@gmail.com
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment - Agenda Item 2-AA - November 20, 2025
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 8:19:28 AM
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Dear Fresno City Council –

Please DO NOT ban natural kratom! Please regulate the natural plant so it is available to consumers who really need it. Please BAN the synthetic 7-OH products (and other synthetic)! These products have no safety record, no science and can cause respiratory depression.

I am sharing my story with you today so that you can understand the human side of kratom and how your decision will impact the lives of thousands who rely on this botanical. I am a very normal 55-year-old wife, mother, grandma, and conservative voice. At 42 years old I joined the ranks of the chronic pain community with my diagnosis. I feel compelled to explain to you how natural kratom has changed my life and allowed me to function. I also feel it is extremely important to stress that natural kratom is very different from synthetic 7-OH. I know that protecting your citizens is your entire goal. By banning 7-OH you are ensuring that the problem synthetic products are off your shelves. By regulating kratom, you are allowing safe access for those who rely on kratom.

I am a patient with Atypical Trigeminal Neuralgia (ATN). This disease causes severe facial nerve pain that never stops. It presents in my sinus regions on both sides. Imagine an ice cream headache that never goes away. This is what I experience daily. This disease is called “the suicide disease” because it can be one of the most painful conditions to live with.

I have been struggling with ATN for the past 13 years. I have tried everything to control my pain: brain surgery, a nerve stimulator implant in my face, blocks, lidocaine infusions, chiropractic, acupuncture, physical therapy and over 30+ medications to try and decrease this pain. I was referred to a pain clinic after my neurologist exhausted all options for me. Under the care of a pain physician, I was given two oxycodone per day.

.This dose of oxycodone was not enough to control my excruciating pain. It gave me relief for approximately 4-5 hours. This meant that for 16 hours of the day and night, I did not have any pain control. I suffered immensely. Since I had tried all available options to control this pain, I began looking at alternative solutions. I heard about the plant kratom that many were using successfully to help control their TN pain. I decided to try it. Amazingly enough, I got instant

relief. My pain did not go away, but it moved from an 8-9 to a 2-4 with the use of a low dose of kratom. I still have very bad days where nothing really helps, but the majority of the time, I can function very well. I am an 8-year kratom consumer. Kratom has allowed me to discontinue my daily opioid prescription!

Patients like me need pain control options. I read stories every day of patients who are being forced off their pain medication and given no other options. While taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain control works for some, when people have severe illness and pain, these over-the-counter meds do not help. What is not understood by many lawmakers and physicians is that you cannot survive at constant 8-10 level pain for an extended period of time without snapping. Mentally this amount of pain changes your brain, and suicide becomes a real option. We don't want to die. We want to live! I don't take kratom to get any sort of a high. In fact, the reason I love kratom is that it makes me feel more normal! There is no physical craving for this supplement. The only craving I have is the desire to have my pain drop a few points.

Pain patients are the silent minority in this country. We are the ones who have no voice. We are hidden away in our homes, unable to work, go to lunch, and even drive a car at times. All we are asking for is compassion and access to medication and natural supplements that give us some quality of life. Sometimes I lay awake at night thinking about the real possibility that kratom could become illegal. What would I then do for pain control? That is a thought that haunts me. Opioids are no longer available to most patients. I could not live at level 9-10 which is what I would be at without pain control. The answer for me was Kratom. I am grateful every day that it is legal and that I have the option to use this supplement.

Please give pain patients a voice! Regulate kratom instead of banning it! Currently the adverse events being reported are most frequently coming from 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) synthetic products and not from pure kratom. 7-OH products SHOULD be banned since they are not kratom. Please do not assume that these products are the same. 7-OH is NOT kratom.

By regulating and not banning kratom, you are showing those that rely on kratom to treat their pain, anxiety and even drug withdrawals with kratom truly matter. You have the power to keep us functioning so we can give back to society and take care of our families. Thank you!

Lora Romney
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Before Kratom – Uncontrolled pain, surgeries, procedures (Cephaly device pictured....trying to control the pain)



With Kratom – Controlled pain, living life, being a grandma

Lora Romney
801-557-1144



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From: [Jennifer Mercier](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Cc: [Lora Romney](#)
Subject: [WARNING: UNSCANNABLE EXTRACTION FAILED]Agenda Item 2-AA - November 20, 2025
Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 9:01:01 AM

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Scientific Opposition to Any Proposed Kratom Ban

Dear Fresno Board Members and 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 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

Any ban or unreasonable restrictions on kratom in Fresno would not only remove a valuable tool for individuals like myself but would also stand in direct opposition to the scientific evidence and expert consensus urging regulation over prohibition. 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 California could easily replicate. Example: [Georgia KCPA Bill](#). Recently we worked with several other municipalities to implement a proper age gateway & regulation in their community, to ensure adults still had access.

As your state continues to battle the opioid crisis, eliminating safe and effective alternatives like kratom could do more harm than good. Many veterans, cancer patients, and chronic pain sufferers 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.

I have also included important information below in regards to kratom safety and the claims it is dangerous.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Mercier
Hopeful Consumer & Advocate

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

This report addresses a critical issue affecting public perception, regulatory decisions, and community health policy: **the misclassification of kratom on death certificates as the “primary cause of death.”**

Extensive scientific literature, federal data, and peer-reviewed toxicology research demonstrate that these classifications are **methodologically flawed, not supported by standard forensic practice, and frequently contradicted by the underlying toxicology reports.**

The purpose of this submission is to ensure that Board decisions are based on **evidence**, not misinterpretations that arise from inconsistent coroner practices or incomplete toxicology.

1. Death Certificates Are Interpretations — Not Scientific Proof

Death certificates do **not** represent laboratory conclusions.

They reflect the **opinion** of the coroner or medical examiner, whose training and qualifications vary dramatically from state to state.

In some jurisdictions, coroners have **no medical degree**, yet are permitted to assign causation of death.

Even when a medical examiner is trained, causation requires:

- complete toxicology screening
- evidence of pharmacological toxicity
- dose-response analysis
- exclusion of underlying medical conditions
- exclusion of other substances

These standards are **almost never met** in kratom-involved cases.

2. There Is No Established Lethal Dose of Kratom in Humans

Unlike alcohol, opioids, or acetaminophen, **no scientifically recognized fatal concentration** of mitragynine (kratom’s primary alkaloid) has been identified in humans.

The FDA has *not* established one.

NIDA has *not* established one.

Peer-reviewed literature has *not* established one.

Without a known lethal dose, scientific causation cannot be assigned.

3. The CDC: Nearly All “Kratom Deaths” Involve Multiple Substances

The CDC’s report “Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths with Kratom Detected — 27 States” found:

- 91/152 decedents were labeled “kratom-involved” by coroners

- **BUT >90% had multiple other substances detected**, most commonly:
 - fentanyl
 - heroin
 - benzodiazepines
 - antidepressants
 - alcohol

The CDC explicitly states that **the presence of kratom does not prove it caused or contributed to death.**

This alone invalidates the practice of listing kratom as the primary cause.

4. Peer-Reviewed Science Shows Causation Cannot Be Assigned

Frontiers in Pharmacology (2024)

The journal reports:

“Most kratom-associated deaths include the presence of multiple potentially lethal drug concentrations, making the role of kratom difficult to ascertain.”

Narrative Review of Kratom Toxicology (PMC, 2022)

This review states:

“Kratom-associated fatalities commonly report suspected polysubstance use... the role of kratom is difficult to determine.”

It also emphasizes that kratom alkaloids are **not included in standard forensic screens**, meaning other substances often go undetected.

Krypton Case Study — Not Kratom Alone

Nine Swedish deaths attributed to “kratom” were later proven to involve **O-desmethylnaloxone**, a potent opioid added to the product. Yet many databases still list them as “kratom deaths.”

This demonstrates how death-certificate data becomes permanently misleading.

5. “Presence” Does Not Equal “Cause” — But Coroners Often Treat It That Way

Standard forensic toxicology requires distinguishing between:

- **presence** (a substance exists in the blood)
- **toxicity** (a substance reached harmful levels)
- **causation** (a substance was responsible for death)

In kratom-related cases, coroners routinely skip the last two steps and list cause based solely on **presence** — a fundamental violation of forensic science.

6. Toxicology Panels Are Often Incomplete

Many toxicology labs **do not test for**:

- fentanyl analogs
- novel benzodiazepines
- synthetic sedatives
- xylazine
- designer opioids
- phenibut
- kratom adulterants

When these substances go undetected, the blame is erroneously shifted to the only thing that *was* tested for — often mitragynine.

This creates a false appearance of kratom-caused fatalities.

7. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Acknowledges Misclassification

NIDA has repeatedly stated that:

- Deaths attributed to kratom are often the result of **concurrent substance use**.
- The role of kratom in these deaths is **uncertain and frequently misrepresented**.
- No causal relationship between pure kratom and fatal overdose has been established.

This directly contradicts claims that kratom alone causes fatal toxicity.

8. Summary of Scientific Consensus

Across multiple federal agencies and scientific journals, the consensus is clear:

- **Kratom is rarely the sole substance present in alleged “kratom deaths.”**
- **There is no proven lethal dose of kratom in humans.**

- **Coroner reports frequently misassign causation.**
 - **Toxicology panels are often incomplete.**
 - **Death certificates listing kratom as the cause should not be used as evidence of its lethality.**
-

9. Request to Lawmakers

Given the inconsistency, unreliability, and acknowledged methodological flaws in kratom-related death certifications, I respectfully request that the Board:

1. Refrain from using death certificates as evidence of kratom lethality.

They do not meet the standards of scientific proof.

2. Use CDC, NIDA, and peer-reviewed literature as the primary source of evidence.

Scientific bodies consistently caution against misinterpreting these data.

3. Avoid regulatory or prohibition measures based on misclassified, non-causal death data.

Policy must be based on validated science, not on assumptions or misinterpretations.

In Conclusion

Kratom should be assessed with the same scientific rigor applied to any other botanical or dietary substance.

The current practice of treating the *presence* of mitragynine as *proof of causation* misinforms the public, misleads policymakers, and undermines good faith efforts to craft evidence-based health policy.

I urge lawmakers to ground all decisions about kratom in **verified science**, not in misclassified or unsupported death-certificate data.

Thank you for your time and commitment to public health.