

Testimony in Support of SB2408

Submitted by Jenni Olds

My name is Jenni Olds, and I am submitting this testimony in support of SB2408. Banning all synthetic derivatives of mitragynine, including 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), MGM-15, and MGM-16, is the correct step forward. This approach protects consumers while preserving an important tool for patients managing chronic pain.

Why Natural Kratom Differs from Synthetic Derivatives

Unadulterated, natural whole-leaf kratom is far safer than semi-synthetic and fully synthetic derivatives. The distinction comes down to pharmacology: 7-OH and the MGM compounds act as full agonists at opioid receptors, whereas whole-leaf, unadulterated kratom acts only as a partial agonist. In practical terms, full agonists can suppress breathing and produce euphoria, while partial agonists like natural kratom do not carry the same respiratory risk and do not produce an intoxicating high.

Kratom itself, not the synthetic derivatives, has been used safely in Southeast Asia for thousands of years. It was introduced to the United States after the Vietnam War, when returning soldiers brought it back with them.

My Experience

I have used unadulterated, whole-leaf kratom for over a decade to manage chronic pain from Crohn's disease and multiple sclerosis. It changed the course of my life. In the 1990s, I was one of many patients caught up in the overprescription of opioid medications. Over a fourteen-year period, I was prescribed more painkillers than a terminal cancer patient, yet I remained in debilitating pain.

Determined to break that cycle, I checked myself into detox. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. Within seven days, I was off all pain medication, and I followed up with outpatient substance abuse therapy and Narcotics Anonymous support meetings. Six months into my sobriety, I developed post-acute withdrawal syndrome (PAWS). My pain returned tenfold, along with anxiety, depression, and low energy.

Looking for relief, I visited a local head shop intending to try marijuana for my pain. I explained my situation to the owner, and he introduced me to kratom. Before trying it, I researched it thoroughly, though far less information was available then than there is today. I ultimately decided to try the whole-leaf powder.

The results were remarkable. Within fifteen minutes of ingesting the leaf material, my pain subsided. It felt as though a weight had been lifted from me. From that day forward, I became a committed kratom advocate.

Ongoing Scientific Research

The National Institutes of Health has cleared an investigational new drug application and is leading a Phase 1 clinical trial studying mitragynine, one of kratom's primary compounds, as a potential treatment for opioid use disorder. The trial is being conducted under the NIH's HEAL Initiative, which was established to address the opioid crisis through research into prevention, treatment, and pain management. Researchers at the NIH developed the purified mitragynine formulation in collaboration with scientists at the University of Florida, and the initial phase will test the compound in a small group of healthy volunteers with recent histories of opioid use.

Closing

This plant has saved many lives and remains a valuable tool for chronic pain patients and others managing a range of conditions. As I noted above, natural kratom does not impair users or create addiction. There is an important distinction between addiction and dependence. A person with high blood pressure who takes blood pressure medication to manage the condition is not addicted; they are dependent on a treatment that keeps them well. In the same way, many of us rely on this plant to manage chronic pain conditions.

I support a full ban on synthetic mitragynine derivatives while preserving access to natural, whole-leaf kratom. I ask that you take my testimony, and the testimony of others sharing similar experiences, into consideration. For many of us, this issue is a matter of life and death.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Olds

Helpful Resources

www.endkratommisinformation.org

- Kratom Index (all peer-reviewed scientific research): <https://kratomindex.com/>
- Investigative video, "Goob Goes Undercover To Expose 7-OH" (The Goob Show): <https://youtu.be/x0PmZRte0hk?si=kmzkupnrQEESyHQ>
- Expert discussion video, "What the Experts Say Regarding Kratom": https://youtu.be/9LT0w0_4R4E?si=bd4kF7piN39ToMU
- Investigative video, "The Hidden Dangers Behind the 7-OH Industry": <https://youtu.be/sBWkK9RsqIw?si=hY5jU7ZZXIbIYLxy>