



October 6, 2024

Mayor Bruce Teague
Iowa City City Council
410 E Washington St
Iowa City, IA 52240

Dear Mayor Teague and Members of the Iowa City Council:

I write on behalf of the American Kratom Association (AKA) following the City Council's vote on October 1, 2024, to advance the proposal to ban kratom in Iowa City for future consideration. We heard the Council members concerns about the safety profile of kratom, and we would like to assure you that the AKA will provide additional, scientifically backed information to help address these concerns. Our organization is fully committed to ensuring that any deliberations about kratom are informed by the latest research and evidence regarding kratom's safety and responsible consumer use.

However, the immediate purpose of this letter is to address a matter of grave concern that has surfaced during the public comment process on this issue. In your comments during the October 1, 2024, Council Meeting you and another Council member referenced reports from several Iowa City residents whose identities were allegedly misappropriated in fraudulent emails that were submitted in opposition to the proposed kratom ban. These emails falsely presented the individuals as opponents of the ban, when in fact, they did not write or authorize those communications. The AKA takes such illegal conduct very seriously, as it undermines the integrity of the democratic process and erodes trust in the public discourse on important policy decisions.

The AKA regularly engages in advocacy campaigns in response to local government entities considering regulations or bans on kratom. In this instance, the AKA sent an advocacy alert that contained the published email address for the Iowa City City Council and encouraged those Iowa residents to contact the Council and express their views. The AKA does not have any list of Iowa City residents, only kratom consumers who have signed up as supporters of our efforts. We initiated an advocacy alert in Iowa because we believe the actions of the Iowa City City Council would have an impact on both city residents and residents of the state of Iowa. The AKA has never asked any pro-kratom advocate to falsely attribute an advocacy message or misappropriate the identity of any other person.

The AKA will file a formal complaint with the Iowa City Police Chief regarding these incidents. We will fully cooperate with the investigation and will request a digital copy of every email submitted to the Council so that the IP addresses associated with these fraudulent submissions can be trace to their source. It is crucial to identify whether

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these actions were taken by a well-intentioned pro-kratom advocate who resorted to illegal methods or by an anti-kratom advocate attempting to sabotage the credibility of our advocacy efforts. Regardless of the motivation, such actions are unacceptable and must be thoroughly investigated.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time we have encountered such unethical tactics. During a recent advocacy campaign with the Virginia Board of Pharmacy, my identity, as the AKA Senior Fellow on Public Policy was misappropriated in fake comments, and other high-profile kratom advocates experienced similar fraudulent activities clearly done by anti-kratom activists.

In a separate and particularly egregious case, a prominent anti-kratom trial lawyer deliberately doctored a photograph that I am in with U.S. Senator Joe Manchin. This anti-kratom attorney then inserted his image over Senator Manchin, all in an effort to falsely imply a personal friendship between himself and me for the apparent purpose of undermining my credibility in the kratom community.

The AKA believes that it is vital to protect the integrity of public policymaking from these kinds of bad actors. We look forward to working with the City Council and the Iowa City Police Department to ensure that the ongoing deliberations regarding kratom are based on factual, transparent, and legally sound input from all stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter. We will continue to provide additional information regarding the safety of kratom, and we hope to engage in constructive dialogue with the Council in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,



Mac Haddow
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American Kratom Association
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cc: Megan Alter, Councilor, At-Large
Laura Bergus, Councilor, District A
Andrew Dunn, Councilor, District C
Shawn Harmsen, Councilor, District B
Josh Moe, Councilor, At-Large
Mazahir Salih, Mayor Pro Tem, At-Large
Dustin Liston, Police Chief

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Geoff Fruin, City Manager
Eric Goers, City Attorney