Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska Marijuana Control Board,

I am writing to you today as a licensee of a retail marijuana store and as a member of the public who sees the safety reasons for this proposed regulation. I would thank the board for this regulation project and the AMCO examiners for all their hard work bringing this regulation draft to us for public comment. As I'm sure you recall, I have been in front of this board on a couple of occasions regarding this exact matter. I am here today to express my support for the majority of the proposed regulation, 3AAC 306.380, Walk-up or Drive-through Exterior Window Pick-up for Retail Marijuana Stores. This new regulation will give customers a simple, secure, and safe way to buy marijuana and marijuana-related products.

All of us Alaskans have to value our safety and security. As much as we love and cherish our town and State, it is not lost on us that our weather and geographical conditions are harsh. The conditions are extreme for anyone, but the concern is heightened for our elders. Accessibility is crucial to keep us safe and healthy. One of the main benefits of drive-through locations is the convenience it provides to legal marijuana consumers, particularly those with mobility limitations or disabilities. Some of us have trouble walking, some of us can't walk, and we rely on wheelchairs or other walking/mobility aids. Some of us have such major accessibility hindrances that we're too afraid to leave our houses regularly, knowing we must get out of our vehicles and walk through parking lots and areas that can be directly affected by the extreme weather Alaska has to get to our destination. Sometimes the weather can be too much, high winds/blizzards, rain, heat, etc., so instead, we go without because we cannot get from the car to the building without having safety issues. Now, some people will say, "so what, don't buy or smoke weed if you can't get to the store" this statement doesn't take into consideration that some people have either physical or moral reasons to take marijuana as an alternative to opiates or other pharmaceuticals, just because the State of Alaska has recreationally legal marijuana doesn't negate the fact that marijuana has medicinal benefits.

When 3 AAC 306.380 is passed, it will allow these individuals to purchase their desired products without physically entering the store; consumers will still be on the licensed premises, they will still follow the identification regulations, the required signage will still be visible to customers while making their way through the drive through thus, making marijuana more accessible and more convenient for elders and other-abled individuals while remaining legal.

Drive-through locations at retail marijuana stores in Nome and statewide would significantly reduce our safety risks, especially in winter or inclement weather. Elders, in particular, will benefit from this option as they can access their desired products without physically entering the store, which is crucial for their safety. The harsh weather conditions in Nome can be extremely challenging for anyone, especially those who rely on wheelchairs or other mobility aids. The drive-through option will reduce the safety risks for these individuals, as they no longer have to walk through windy, rainy, snowy, and slippery conditions to access the store.

In addition to convenience, drive-through locations also offer enhanced safety measures. All transactions will be recorded through video surveillance and kept on file for at least 40 days, ensuring the legality of each sale and verifying the customer's identification. The requirement for payment to be made through an electronic platform or mobile point-of-sale system also adds an extra layer of security, further reducing the risk of theft.

I appreciate the proposed regulations' consideration of the requirements and restrictions imposed by local governments; this shows the MCB's commitment to responsible regulation and respect for local communities and their concerns. The City of Nome and its elders have also shown their support for this regulation, demonstrating the importance of this proposed change.

All this being said, I do think that 3 AAC 306.380 (e) needs to be adjusted, "Prior to completing a sale at a walk-up or drive-through exterior window, the licensee or the employee shall physically view and inspect the consumer's photo identification" – this part is 100% acceptable however, "Each person in a vehicle at the drive-through exterior window must be 21 years of age or older unless the person is the consumer's own child, grandchild, or ward who is not older than seven years of age seated or otherwise required by local or sat law to be seated in a car seat or booster seat." First and foremost, adding this to the proposed regulation completely defeats the purpose. Parents do not want to leave their children in unattended running vehicles in the long cold Alaskan winter. The board hears this, so we get a reg project drafted only for the regulation to say that only parents of children in car seats can use the drive through, all other parents need to leave their children unattended in a running vehicle or get a babysitter to run to the retail marijuana store, and this should not be the case. Also, not many parents carry ID for their children, so how does a parent of a tall or large child and not in a booster or car seat prove their age? Not only does this pose a problem, but it is i a bit of a government over-reach over a product that, under 3 AAC 306.345(a)(3) at the point of sale, marijuana or a marijuana product sold is packaged in resealable, child-resistant packaging designed to constructed to be significantly difficult for children under five years of age to open, but not normally difficult for adults to use properly; and (4) unless already packaged by the cultivation facility or the manufacturing facility in an opaque package for final retail sale, any marijuana or marijuana product purchased by the consumer is placed in an opaque package by the retail marijuana store or the consumer before the consumer exits the retail marijuana store. Parents can drive through a pharmacy drive-through with a van load of children and pick up hundreds or thousands of milligrams of opiates without question or take their children into a liquor store where children can clearly see every item for sale, but a parent can't drive through a pot shop drive through and pick up "some weed" that's in an opaque container because their over-seven child is in the car is non-sensical. . Allowing parents to make their own choices for their families is a human right and may open up the conversation they all need to have with their families.

In conclusion, the proposed regulation, 3AAC 306.380, Walk-up or Drive-through Exterior Window Pick-up for Retail Marijuana Stores, with some minor changes, is a positive step forward for the retail marijuana industry in Alaska. It will provide customers with more convenient and safe access to marijuana and marijuana-related products while also ensuring the legality and security of each transaction.

Thank you for considering my comments and for your commitment to the responsible regulation of the retail marijuana industry. I strongly support the proposed regulation and hope it will be implemented soon.

Sincerely,

Greg Smith