



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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HOLLY J. MITCHELL
LINDSEY P. HORVATH
JANICE HAHN
KATHRYN BARGER

Correspondence Received

The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:				
Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
12.		Favor	Ali Rastak	Kratom and 70H have destroyed my life and left me with depression and suicidal ideation! I'm a recovering alcoholic that was sold a bill of goods that Kratom was safe and would help me get off alcohol. I've wasted my life stuck on this green sludge! I tried 70H and it sent me into manic depression and have now been trying to find a way to get off it! This stuff is not a joke! Please ban this so no one else goes thru what I'm going thru! Opioids are not safe! This is not safe! Kids can easily purchase this online or thru smoke shops. Keeps our streets safe! Ban all Kratom products!
			Dan Gibbs	Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, On December 6, 2023, my son Austin died alone in his bedroom after consuming a kratom product he believed was legal and safe. He was not a drug user. He was a normal young man with plans, relationships, and a future. He worked, he laughed, and he believed—because he was repeatedly told—that kratom was a “natural” and safer product. That belief cost him his life. Austin’s official autopsy and toxicology report, completed by the Montgomery County, Ohio Coroner, determined: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cause of Death: Intoxication by mitragynine• Toxicology: Mitragynine only• No fentanyl, no illicit drugs, and no prescription opioids present• Findings: Pulmonary edema and frothy airway fluid, consistent with opioid-type respiratory depression This was not a contaminated product. It was not mixed with alcohol. It was not misuse in the way advocates often imply. It was the predictable pharmacological effect of kratom itself. I am submitting this public comment in strong support of Los Angeles County taking action to prohibit the sale of all kratom products within county jurisdiction, because what happened to my son was not an anomaly—it is the foreseeable outcome of a product that has been normalized, defended, and misrepresented by industry-backed advocacy groups. Groups such as the American Kratom Association, the Global Kratom Coalition, and affiliated advocates have adopted a consistent strategy in public forums: they aggressively focus attention on 7-hydroxymitragynine while repeatedly minimizing—or outright dismissing—the risks of mitragynine

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and so-called "pure leaf" kratom.

They tell policymakers that the danger lies only in "synthetic" or "isolated" 7-OH products, while portraying natural kratom leaf as mild, safe, and non-lethal. They insist that mitragynine alone cannot cause fatal harm and that deaths are only possible when kratom is adulterated or mixed with other substances.

This framing is not just misleading — it is scientifically backwards.

Kratom leaf is the precursor. You cannot have 7-hydroxymitragynine without mitragynine, and you cannot have mitragynine without kratom leaf.

Every kratom product—powder, capsule, tea, extract, or concentrate—begins with the kratom leaf. The alkaloids later discussed as if they are separate substances are taken directly from that leaf. Through drying, grinding, brewing, or chemical extraction, those alkaloids are pulled from the plant material and delivered into the human body in varying concentrations.

So-called "derived" or "isolated" alkaloids are not independent substances — they are concentrated components of the leaf itself. Whether swallowed as powder or consumed after extraction, the source is the same. The difference is dose, speed of absorption, and potency — not safety.

Once ingested, the human liver naturally converts a portion of mitragynine into 7-hydroxymitragynine. This conversion is unavoidable. No labeling, regulation, or marketing distinction can separate "leaf" from "derivative" inside the human body.

Focusing on 7-OH while defending kratom leaf is like banning smoke while insisting fire is safe. One does not exist without the other, and no regulatory scheme can divide them once consumed.

And this is where the industry's own testimony undermines its claims.

When kratom advocates state that "pure leaf kratom got me off morphine, oxycodone, heroin, or fentanyl and saved my life," they are not demonstrating safety.

They are demonstrating opioid equivalence.

A substance does not replace heroin unless it acts on the same opioid receptors. A product does not suppress opioid withdrawal unless it has clinically meaningful opioid potency. These statements cannot coexist with claims that mitragynine is weak or harmless.

Those claims are not evidence.

They are admissions.



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Public health decisions are not made based on anecdotes or individual benefit stories. They are made based on mechanism of action, toxicology, and population-level risk. By their own words, kratom advocates are describing opioid substitution — not a dietary supplement.

Austin believed kratom was safe because it was legal, sold openly, and defended in public forums by organizations that minimized its risks. That false sense of safety cost him his life.

Los Angeles County has both the authority and the responsibility to act when a product poses a clear public-health risk and when regulation has failed to protect residents.

I urge the Board to place public safety above coordinated misinformation campaigns and outside pressure, and to take decisive action to prohibit the sale of kratom products within the county.

If “pure leaf” kratom were truly safe, there would be no need for an industry to spend years insisting that the deaths caused by mitragynine don’t count unless they can be blamed on something else.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dan Gibbs
Parent

Holly Trouville

My name is Holly Trouville and I am writing to you as a mother who lost her only child Ty, to mitragynine toxicity, on February 6th, 2024. I am not a lobbyist, a business owner making money, nor a user. My only goal is to prevent any parent from feeling the complete and utter devastation I felt losing my only child. I am trying to prevent having a parent only be able to speak to their child, 6 feet under, in a cemetery.

Mitragynine toxicity was Tyrell’s sole cause of death, with no secondary causes nor opioids in his system. And, it was ruled as only an accident, not an accidental overdose. Tyrell died from a Kratom seltzer drink that is marketed as caffeine free, sugar free, and alcohol free. He drank them at the Kava bar he would go to.

Regulation does not work, as much as people may think it does. The majority of deaths are men over 21, to regulate under 21 is futile. Due to there being no federal regulations, oversight, nor FDA approval, we do not know if mixing anything with Kratom, even something such as Benadryl or prescription medicine will give an adverse effect. There is not enough information known to say how much could be taken to prevent an adverse effect. There is no labeling saying what could cause an adverse effect. There are also no dosage recommendations on any of these packages. So when talking about selling Kratom to uninformed consumers, people who are looking for help and



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trusting sellers to do the right thing, that is not always happening.

Here are proven facts. The majority of people using whole leaf, synthetic, or 7OH are recovering addicts. You can hear it in almost every hearing. Why did Feel Free Wellness Tonic, one of the largest sellers of Kratom drinks, have to pay 8.75 million dollars and add a disclaimer on the back of their can stating "Individuals with a history of substance abuse are advised against use." If it is so natural, why can't you use it if you have a history of substance abuse and why does it state you should consult a physician before trying it, if you are on any medication? This should be gravely concerning to you.

You will hear people testify that veterans use it to help them with their PTSD. Then please answer this, why did the DOD ban Kratom in ALL armed forces? Use of it is punishable by the Uniform Military Code of Justice. That in and of itself is telling. The DOD obviously does not believe it benefits military people. I could go on and on but these are just a couple examples of how Kratom, in all forms, is being recognized as dangerous, addictive, and deadly.

I implore you to ban ALL forms of Kratom, natural and synthetic. You will be saving more lives than not. Lastly, all of these people testifying that Kratom has saved their life, that is opinion only. I have yet to see one letter from a doctor stating that it has saved a life. You will not see that because a doctor will not put their stamp on that. However, I have a letter from a doctor stating that Kratom took my son's life. Death certificates do not lie, autopsy reports do not lie.

Please don't allow another parent to have to live the rest of their life without their child, due to a substance, in all of its forms, that will continue to kill some of the people you represent.

Thank you and with much respect,
Holly

J A	Ban alcohol while you're at it. It's killing WAY MORE people than 7-OH.
Jennifer Nicole Brandt	<p>Written Testimony in Support of the Prohibition of Kratom and 7-Hydroxymitragynine Sales in Los Angeles</p> <p>I submit this testimony in support of Los Angeles taking decisive action to prohibit the sale of kratom and its active metabolite, 7-hydroxymitragynine. This is not a speculative policy decision. It is a necessary response to documented risk, federal determinations, and an enforcement reality the City has already begun to confront.</p> <p>The California Department of Health is currently seizing these products as adulterated. That matters. Adulteration is not a matter of labeling preference or consumer education. It is a legal finding grounded in federal law and scientific review. When a product is determined to be adulterated by the FDA,</p>



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it is not suitable for lawful commerce. Continuing to allow retail sales under those conditions does not protect consumers; it shifts risk onto the public while asking enforcement agencies to manage the fallout.

Kratom products have been sold for years without honest warnings: no plain-language disclosure of dependence, no clear acknowledgment of opioid-like withdrawal, and no risk communication consistent with their pharmacology. Consumers were told these products were natural and safe. What they were not told is that 7-hydroxymitragynine is a potent mu-opioid receptor agonist, that dependence is predictable, and that withdrawal can be severe. That silence was not accidental. It was profitable.

This is not a question of whether some users report perceived benefit. It is a question of whether a city knowingly allows the sale of products that federal regulators have determined to be adulterated, that are being seized by the health department, and that impose real downstream costs on emergency rooms, treatment systems, and families. Once those facts are known, neutrality disappears. Delay becomes a decision.

California has already taken the first step by removing these products from shelves through seizure. The next step is to align policy with enforcement so that public health workers are not forced into a perpetual game of whack-a-mole. A ban provides clarity. It protects consumers who never intended to assume opioid-like risk. And it protects the City from the predictable consequences of allowing an unregulated drug market to expand while federal scrutiny accelerates.

Federal scrutiny is increasing, not decreasing. FDA adverse event reports continue to accumulate. CDC mortality surveillance has detected kratom involvement in deaths. Poison control centers report rising calls, including pediatric exposures. The DEA is reviewing a citizen petition requesting Schedule I classification for kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine. International markets have already closed retail channels in response to similar evidence. This trajectory is not difficult to see.

In that context, continuing to permit sales today creates a larger problem tomorrow. If federal action occurs after more residents unknowingly develop dependence, the burden does not disappear. It lands on local systems—on county hospitals, on first responders, on child welfare agencies, and on public health budgets. A clear prohibition now limits that exposure. It does not create it.

This is not about punishing consumers. It is about recognizing that a substance meeting criteria for dependence and withdrawal, and already deemed adulterated by the FDA, does not belong in corner stores, smoke shops, or wellness aisles. Los Angeles would not tolerate the retail sale of other adulterated drug products while asking the public to assume the risk. Kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine should not be treated differently simply because confusion has lingered longer than it should have.



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Government exists to act when evidence is sufficient, not when harm becomes unmanageable. The City has evidence. The Health Department's actions confirm it. What remains is to bring policy in line with reality.

For policymakers and members of the public who want to review the underlying documentation directly including FDA determinations, adverse event data, mortality references, and poison control trends, those materials are compiled and cited at mothersagainsttherbalabuse.org. The record is available. The risks are documented. The question is whether Los Angeles will act while the harm is still preventable.

I urge the City to move forward with a clear prohibition on the sale of kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine. This is not an overcorrection. It is a measured response to facts already established and enforcement already underway. Acting now is not only responsible, it is the least costly option left.

Karen M Davenport	Please Ban. This causes death!! Ban please. I lost my son from this!
KELLI MCCANN	<p>Dear Members of the Board,</p> <p>My name is Kelli McCann. I am writing in support of preventing deaths related to kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) in Los Angeles County by banning kratom in its entirety.</p> <p>My son Benjamin Wilcock died from acute mitragynine intoxication on 9/12/24 at 40 years of age. Nothing atypical was found in his autopsy. He took kratom to manage his psoriatic arthritis pain. He was led to believe that it was a safe and healthy alternative to prescription drugs and about as addictive as coffee. This belief cost him his life, and it cost me my oldest child and only son.</p> <p>I have written many letters sharing about my son's death due to kratom. I live in Montana, but I advocate in all states for a kratom ban because this is not just a state-to-state issue but an issue about humanity. Kratom is shipped all over the country. My son was supplied as much kratom as he wanted from an out of state vendor. My son's birthday was February 1st. It is the second one without him. I spent the day with a journalist doing a story on kratom in the early part of January who experienced an addiction to kratom years ago. Thankfully with medical intervention he survived it. We went to my son's work to get comments from his employees and see a wall they made in honor of my son. One of Ben's employees said "We all knew Ben took kratom, but we just figured it was for health. He had a "cup of tea" each evening." I am constantly meeting families with similar stories. I will continue to advocate because it is simply the right thing to do. People have died and will continue to die from kratom unless our voices are heard and the appropriate action is taken.</p> <p>The DEA attempted to schedule this dangerous substance in 2016. It has escalated in the last 10 years as evidenced by more dangerous derivatives</p>



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being made, more deaths, more addiction, more adverse effects, etc. Death certificates, autopsy, and toxicology reports are concrete data. It is final. So many of us live with that devastating reality because of this dangerous substance every day and are desperately trying to prevent the same fate for others.

The following are investigative articles regarding kratom that you may find informative.

Hundreds died using kratom in Florida. It was touted as safe. | Tampa Bay Times

Can kratom kill? | Courthouse News Service

Addiction and the kratom business | Courthouse News Service

The kratom playbook: Working the refs | Courthouse News Service

The law and the profits: Inside kratom's political underbelly | Courthouse News Service

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kelli McCann (Benjamin's mom)

Stacey Reilly

The purpose of this correspondence is to inform you of my family's story in regard to the drug, Kratom. My son, James, was a bright, funny and hard-working young man. During his senior year of high school, he experimented with alcohol and it quickly became a problem for him. A friend told him about this wonder-drug, Kratom that could help him stop drinking. James started taking Kratom in 2018, and it did help him to stop drinking.

Unfortunately, he became addicted to Kratom and developed a tolerance to it. James thought Kratom was a safe product until he realized he had a problem. He tried to taper off this drug, but he had trouble doing it. Kratom withdrawal caused him many physical symptoms such as severe muscle aches, sleeplessness, restless legs, depression and mood swings. Despite this, for a while, he was successful in cutting down on this drug.

James relapsed September, 2020 and had a grand mal seizure due to Kratom use and was hospitalized. The doctors had no idea what Kratom was and called poison control. He had another seizure in October and had a similar experience at the hospital. There was no way to get him into a treatment center, as no beds were available. Regrettably, on February 5, 2021, James died of Kratom (*Mitragyna Speciosa*) toxicity; he was 21 years old. Our family is devastated by the loss of our beloved son. The truth about Kratom is that it is absolute poison.

Sincerely,



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		Stacey B. Reilly
Steve Schulze		Has had a positive influence in my life
susan Cave		<p>My name is Susan Cave. I am a strong advocate for kratom bans, whether at the local, state or federal level.</p> <p>I am also the mother of William Cave, who died at just 32 years old from mitragynine toxicity — the primary alkaloid in kratom.</p> <p>William was a healthy young man who worked hard. He had no history of addiction or drug use or abuse. He was a loving father of one daughter and a devoted husband... On April 20 2024, my son did not come home. His toxicology confirmed mitragynine was his killer. My William died from a toxic mixture of his prescribed antidepressants and Mitragynine.</p> <p>William had been prescribed antidepressants for anxiety and depression early in his life after the unexpected loss of his dad when he was 14 yrs old. As he grew up, he still felt depressed & anxious even though he followed up with his primary doctor as scheduled and took his meds as prescribed.</p> <p>One day, he spoke to a person at his work who told him all about kratom and how kratom would help. He looked into kratom, and what he read and heard said it was safe, all natural, and that it helps with anxiety/ depression...so he started using kratom.</p> <p>After he discovered kratom, he became a chronic user and became dependent on it.... He kept having to up his dose to get the same desired effect. As time went on, he started feeling worse with his anxiety & depression.</p> <p>He tried many times to stop taking kratom after he realized he had become dependent and felt even worse than before. He tried to taper; He tried to stop cold turkey....MANYMANYTIMES He tried to stop. It was a vicious cycle. One time he experienced sever withdrawal symptoms ...that I witnessed. On April 20 2024, my son did not come home. Witnesses say he simply fell forward and did not get up. By the time they got to him he was gone.</p>
Susan Eppard		<p>I support banning all forms of Kratom.</p> <p>In 2021 my 22 year old son Matthew Eller died from whole leaf Kratom Powder (the least potent form of Kratom available in the United States). Kratom caused him to have a seizure, go into cardiac arrest and die. His toxicology showed he died from the "TOXIC effects of Mitragynine" an alkaloid found only in Kratom. He had no prescription drugs, no street drugs nor alcohol in his system when he died, and his autopsy showed he had no underlying health conditions. It's important to note my son didn't die from 7-OH/7-hydroxymitragynine.</p> <p>Matthew's toxicology results are attached.</p>



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		<p>Tia Rustici</p> <p>I'm here supporting a full ban on kratom. My perspective comes from a loss no parent should ever experience. My daughter Kielee died on March 1st 2025 of a mitragynine overdose. She was only 23. Because she was so young they had to do an investigation. After an autopsy and toxicology screen was preformed mitragynine overdose was determined to be the factor of death.</p> <p>Kratom took my daughter's life and robbed the world of the light she brought into it. She trusted the word natural. Kielee used the natural kratom powder. She believed it was safe to use for pain because that is how the industry markets it. She was not using extracts or 7OH products. The leaf itself killed her. Regulations wouldn't have saved her because she was 23 and didn't buy it from a gas station.</p> <p>Mitragynine and 7OH both bind to the same opioid receptors as morphine. The idea that the natural powder is harmless while only certain extracts are dangerous is not supported by what is happening in real families. Both forms take lives.</p> <p>My state of Idaho reported 83 kratom involved deaths between 2020 and 2024. Bonneville County recorded six deaths in eighteen months. Four were from mitragynine alone one of was my daughter. Mitragynine overdose is what I have to read on her death certificate. These deaths mirror what other states are seeing, especially as kratom becomes more available in small shops and gas stations.</p> <p>I want you to understand this because your decision will shape what families in your community face. Parents don't know what it is. Young people assume it's safe. The reality does not match the marketing.</p> <p>You may hear the argument that the Kratom Consumer Protection Act is the safer middle ground. It is important to understand what the KCPA actually is. It was written and promoted by the kratom industry, not by medical or toxicology experts. Its purpose is to protect sales,</p> <p>States that passed the KCPA continue to see addiction, poison center calls, emergency room visits, and kratom related deaths. The KCPA does not place real caps on potency. It does not control online sales. Local agencies have no practical way to enforce it. And banning 7OH alone is pointless because mitragynine naturally converts to 7OH once it is inside the body.</p> <p>The industry is already developing new derivatives like MGM 15 and MGM 16. A full ban is the only approach that closes the loopholes and keeps this opioid acting substance out of your community.</p> <p>I know bans are not easy decisions. But I also know what it feels like to stand in my daughter's empty bedroom and wonder how something sold as a</p>
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		<p>"natural herb" destroyed her life. I would give anything to go back and warn her. I can't. But I can warn you.</p> <p>I am asking you to put a ban on kratom so no family has to learn the same lesson through the loss of a child parent spouse or friend. Thank you for taking the time to listen and for putting the safety of your residents first.</p> <p>Sincerely, Tia</p>
	Wanda Richard	<p>First, thank you for takenong the time to be opened minded. I am 69 years old and at my age I have been even many different medications which those medications has been true to form and what di I mean by my last statement? The side effects from these medications was worst than my original issues. I found Kartom Red to be a God sent. Now, I'm not saying I did not have my doubts about an alternative pain relief but, I believe everyone has the freedom to research an alternative in order to advocate for one's own health issues. Which I did and I found Red Kratom to be more effective than all the pills I was given. I am now able to enjoy my days and have become more social with my older friends. In addition, I pray you would stop 7-Hydroxymitragynine this is a synthetic and is not a the Natural Leaf. I was doing some research where others say people have died due to Kartom what I readed individuals also had heroin it was not the Natural Lead that killed the person it was the heroin. Natural Leaf has been used for years. I hope you will not make a decision without gathering more data for the great pain relief of the Natural Leaf. (7-Oh) is dangerous.</p>
	Wendy Chamberlain	
Oppose	Alexandra Djekich	<p>I staunchly oppose the ban of natural kratom and am in favor of banning the artificial substance 7OH. Please understand they are different from one another. Kratom is a plant medicine and its availability to me hugely improves my quality of life. I have an incurable and painful medical condition that is massively alleviated by responsible use of kratom. My health has not been damaged by kratom. I would love to see the actually dangerous synthetic substances off the street and regulated, but PLEASE do not take away kratom with it. I and many other people would suffer.</p>
	Andy Turpen	<p>I oppose a countywide ban on kratom and 7-OH. Many adults, myself included, want access to regulated, science-based harm-reduction options that keep people safe rather than pushing products underground. Prohibition only increases risk. LA County would be better served by deferring to the State and encouraging smart, evidence-driven regulation instead of bans. These decisions shape real lives, and they deserve to be guided by data—not fear or misinformation.</p>
	Anne Harrison	<p>I am in favor of products that contain Kratom like New Brew</p>
	Anonymous Anonymous	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to a blanket ban on natural kratom products. My opposition is rooted in my personal experience and my</p>



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concern for the safety of our community.

Natural kratom products have been a cornerstone of my ability to live a healthier, more productive life. By using natural kratom to curb cravings for opioid medications, I have successfully transitioned away from drug addiction. For me and many others, this plant has served as a critical tool for harm reduction when traditional methods were inaccessible or ineffective.

A total ban will not eliminate the demand for kratom; instead, it will drive current consumers toward an unregulated black market. In the midst of the ongoing fentanyl crisis, pushing residents toward "street" products is a dangerous public health gamble. Legal, accessible kratom allows users to choose products that are transparently labeled, whereas a ban guarantees that the only available products will be untested and potentially laced with lethal synthetic substances.

I urge the Board to distinguish between natural, whole-leaf kratom and the highly concentrated, synthetically-enhanced 7-OH products that have recently been linked to adverse events. Rather than a total ban, I support the implementation of a consumer protection framework which would:

- Prohibit the sale of kratom to minors.
- Require strict labeling and third-party purity testing.
- Ban dangerous synthetic adulterants while maintaining access to the natural botanical for adults who rely on it.

Please consider the unintended consequences of a ban, which could inadvertently lead to an increase in opioid-related fatalities by removing a vital lifeline for those in recovery.

Araya Yung	
Bailey Votion	Kratom has been such a useful drink for whenever I'm studying for my classes or even want to be at a social event where I want to truly feel relaxed while also engaging with others. Kratom has truly changed for my life for better and I think it shouldn't be banned
Benito Estrada	Banning kratom leaf would harm people who are trying to stay off much harsher drugs. Kratom helped me regain stability when nothing else worked. Taking it away doesn't protect people—it risks pushing them back toward more dangerous substances.
Brad Schugardt	Kratom powder, regular Kratom powder does not cause death. There are too many studies proving that Kratom does not slow breathing like drugs that cause death. The claims that people have died from Kratom powder alone is false and they either mixed with a lethal drug or they took something synthetic that was not your regular Kratom powder. Kratom has saved my life and allowed me to live a normal life after years of suffering with opiate abuse. I have never been in an unsafe situation from Kratom. There is a lot of misinformation about Kratom, but research and my personal experience demonstrates that Kratom is safe to is. If you ban Kratom powder, you will cause chaos and destruction to too many lives that need it and depend it to assist with depression and PTSD. Please don't take away a natural plant product from this of us in need.



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Brandon Dinkel	I'm an honest, hard working, productive American citizen. I have been using 7-OH for almost a year now. It has helped me tremendously. The job I do requires standing for prolonged amounts of time in a cold environment and the constant and repetitive use of my hands. My back aches and I wake up almost every morning with my hands throbbing in pain. 7-OH has helped me greatly in managing this pain and being able to continue doing the work that I do so I can support myself, my family, and my community. I'm for regulation, not prohibition. Banning or scheduling it doesn't solve anything. It just pushes it to underground markets where there's more dangerous alternatives accessible. There should be science based research and evidence showing why Kratom and 7-OH should be banned. Prohibiting something shouldn't be based on fear and misinformation. There's plenty of evidence as to why alcohol should be prohibited, but yet it remains legal. I'm all for regulation of Kratom and 7-OH, ensuring minors don't have access to it, and ensuring that products only contain what's on the label. I strongly oppose any form of prohibition, and instead believe it should be regulated, similar to that of tobacco and alcohol products. Thank you for your time and understanding on this matter.
Bryn Hickey	
Cesar Vargas	Kratom has helped me get through life with crippling back pain. It helps me at work and at the gym. Please Don't ban Kratom.
Cheryl McDonald	stops my pain from rh and lupus
Chris Smith	I'm writing to oppose a full ban on natural kratom in LA County. I understand the serious concerns around 7-OH and synthetic/concentrated products linked to overdoses—those should absolutely be restricted or banned, as they are far more potent and risky. However, traditional leaf kratom (like in some beverages) is nothing like those derivatives. It's a natural plant used responsibly by many as a mild stimulant alternative to coffee—gentle energy and focus, not intoxication or high risk. Misinformation is blending the two, leading to overbroad policy. Prohibition of natural forms would harm responsible users without solving the extract problems. Please consider targeted rules (e.g., potency limits, age restrictions, no synthetics) instead of a blanket ban. Many states handle this with regulation, not outright prohibition. Thank you
Chris J Reedy	My personal experience with Kratom is nothing like I read or hear in the media. I use it in lieu of coffee in the morning since coffee bothers my stomach. In no way does it make me feel high. I agree with the banning of 7-OH. But natural leaf Kratom should not be thrown in with 7-OH category. It's like a coors light to everclear. I am just advocating for common sense legislation. I find it makes me more focused and clear headed. I travel a fair amount for work so not having it is not a big deal. I wish you could try feel free or New Brew to realize its not a bid deal as far as mind altering. Just my two cents but definitely against prohibition of Kratom. If you are interested in my experience feel free to call me at 949-500-4038 Regards



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	Chris Reedy
Chris L Weyl	I oppose the ban on the basis that with responsible marketing and sale of products like new brew are helping bring a better option for people to refrain from alcohol. It has helped me personally stay sober for over a year , and I enjoy the relaxing feeling when I am at an outing with family or friends , and I do not need alcohol. The are not many products out that people seeking to be healthier and find products like new brew that give a choice that will help people say no to drinking .
Christian Cardenas	
Ckyla Grays	This flower as contributed to easing pain and stress set in by my work place allowing me to relax during the little time I have away
Craig Burlingame	Kratom saves my life
Cristina Valenzuela	My partner used to struggle with alcoholism, but he is sober now thanks in no small part to kratom infused beverages like New Brew. We would be heartbroken if a blanket ban is passed. We ask for regulations to be made to ensure the kratom being sold is safe, but ask that responsibly made drinks like New Brew are not swept up in a complete ban. I've heard many other stories from people who have struggled, this is a life line to many. A fresh start to many. A way to unwind without getting inebriated. Thank you.
Curt Ensign	Do not ban kratom. Thank you
Dale M Radford	As a consumer of regulated kratom products for over two years, I can speak firsthand to the benefits these products have provided. First, kratom has inspired me to make healthier choices by reducing alcohol consumption in my lifestyle. Second, kratom has increased my productivity without any negative impact on my mental health or wellbeing. In fact, moderate long-term use of regulated kratom products helped me overcome test anxiety and optimize my cognitive performance to pass the California Bar Examination. Third, the proposed LA County ordinance lacks merit and proper scrutiny. The regulated kratom products available in beverages from manufacturers such as New Brew, White Rabbit, Uchie, and Kiva contain none to negligible amounts of 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). These products market responsibly, much like alcoholic beverage manufacturers, and clearly advise users to consume in moderation. Fourth, the case study that has fueled this public health concern is confounded by critical factors. The individuals in question were not only abusing alcohol and consuming toxic levels of cocaine, but they also ingested levels of 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) far exceeding what is found in regulated kratom beverages from the manufacturers listed above. Finally, I urge reconsideration of the economic impact this ban would have on LA County. During 2024 and 2025, thousands of stores across the county experienced revenue increases from kratom sales, generating substantial tax revenue for the County. I strongly urge that informed analysis be applied to this decision, with consideration given to regulating kratom products rather than instituting a blanket ban. As a consumer with a successful experience using kratom to enhance my cognitive and social abilities, access to these regulated products



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		<p>provides a necessary alternative I have not found elsewhere, even with CBD. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10177737/</p>
	Dan Akkaway	<p>From my experience natural leaf Kratom is nothing like the 7-OH variety. The natural leaf Kratom in Feel Free or New Brew has very mild effects. Millions of Americans wake up to a cup of coffee not only for the taste but also for the mild energy boost they get. For many of us that can't tolerate caffeine or just simply don't enjoy the taste of coffee, we enjoy the mild boost we get from natural leaf Kratom. The effect is nothing like the 7-OH variety. I can't imagine it's even possible to overdose on natural leaf Kratom. Please allow us the freedom to decide if we'd like to drink natural leaf Kratom. There is no need to ban it and spend taxpayer dollars to enforce the ban.</p>
	Daniel Soggs	
	Daniel D Arausa	<p>I strongly oppose. This will INCREASE overdose deaths in Los Angeles County. The pharmacological data suggests that it is impossible to overdose on 7-Hydroxymitragynine. This is substantiated by the big data set of national opioid overdose deaths being tightly inversely correlated to the popularity of 7-OH. There is a well-funded misinformation campaign started by the American Kratom Association (AKA) representing older Kratom businesses losing tremendous amounts of their profits to new 7-OH companies. All 3 deaths that have been attributed to 7-OH, the only names released after a request for all deaths attributed to 7-OH, have been disproven after obtaining the toxicology reports through FOIA requests. Banning 7-OH creates a dangerous situation in which millions of Americans suddenly find themselves in opposition of the law for attempting to manage pain or other symptoms. Kratom-derived products have been bringing legitimate pain relief to hundreds of thousands of Californians for years, allowing for legitimate pain relief without the fear and real danger of illicit narcotics' and pharmaceutical opioids' side effects.</p>
	Drea Powers	<p>I've used kratom for over a decade. Kratom has been a positive and life-changing part of my wellness journey. It's a natural plant from the coffee family that helps me manage EDS, CRPS, CPTSD, major depression and panic disorder. It allows me to avoid the harsh side effects that I've experienced from prescription drugs. I learned about kratom from my brother after it got him off of heroin. It has saved my sister's life, also. They both survived fentanyl poisonings in 2016. Kratom is the reason they reached sobriety. It prevented me from getting addicted to pills. Addiction runs in my family- it could've been me.</p> <p>Research from Johns Hopkins University and the University of Florida shows that kratom's natural compounds work differently from opioids — they can relieve pain and improve mood without the dangerous risk of respiratory failure. Studies in Drug and Alcohol Dependence also found that kratom has a low potential for abuse and can even help people reduce dependence on harmful substances.</p>



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		<p>Data from the CDC and the National Institute on Drug Abuse confirm that deaths linked solely to kratom are extremely rare — most cases involve other drugs or contaminants.</p> <p>Another concern of mine is the fact that alcohol has remained easily accessible while being responsible for tens of millions of deaths globally. These deaths have been attributable to alcohol since 2010 (very likely more than 30 million) based on the annual scales involved. Kids are able to get access to alcohol. Alcohol withdrawal is deadly whereas discontinuing Kratom use is not.</p> <p>That's why I believe regulation, not prohibition, is the responsible way. Requiring testing and labeling so products are safe and adults can make informed choices.</p> <p>For me, and for millions of others, kratom has meant a better, healthier quality of life. Please listen to the science, and to the people who use it responsibly every day.</p>
	Emil Crawford	<p>I am a 7-OH consumer and chronic pancreatitis patient that also has 2 IPMN tumors in my pancreas, both of which cause me severe pain and nausea. I have been using 7-OH for pain control as a safer alternative to reliance on stronger prescription medications. Because kratom and its derivatives do not activate the specific opiate receptors that depress breathing and selectively activate others, kratom is much safer than traditional prescription opiate medications and provides a safe alternative to such medications. A blanket ban on the sale of these products would negatively affect thousands of people like myself, and indirectly lead to more deaths, not less, since such patients would have to go back to these inherently more dangerous medications. This is a situation where, although it may seem counterintuitive, the harm caused by the ban will be worse than the harm it purports to prevent. Consider the evidence. Despite its being legal, there are very few deaths (that I am aware of) caused by 7OH, while Fentanyl, for example, which is heavily regulated continues to cause many thousands of deaths each year. There should not be a one-size-fits-all approach to these substances. A blanket ban is a terrible idea that should be rejected in favor of an evidence-based approach to sensible regulation that balances the need of legitimate patients with the need to limit access to these substances to children and those whose sole intent is to abuse them.</p>
	Eric Quade	<p>I support banning or heavily restricting 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) extracts and any semi-synthetic/concentrated products. Those are very different from traditional leaf kratom.— both chemically and in their effects. They simply aren't in the same category.</p> <p>I have only tried new brew a few times, but it has little or no effect on me, but it is an alternative to tea or coffee. My concern is common-sense regulation, not unrestricted access. Blanket prohibition of the natural leaf would eliminate a helpful plant-based option for many people</p>



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who use it responsibly — often as an alternative to caffeine or over-the-counter pain relievers — while doing nothing to address the real risks associated with high-potency extracts.

Evan J Moore	
Hilary Amore	New Brew and Kratom based drinks have helped me relieve my anxiety and curbed my alcohol use to nearly zero. New Brew drinks have helped me continue to be social without the need of alcohol. If THC drinks are allowed, I think Kratom drinks should be also. These drinks have been so helpful and I hope they will not be blanketly banned in LA County.
Jackie Lubrano	
James Franklin	The company New Brew product should not be banned. I am a consumer and it has been very successful in helping me completely curb my own personal consumption of alcohol. It is not dangerous taken in moderation just like anything else in life. The labeling is clear and concise to what it is, what it does and how it affects you. Prohibiting a healthy alternative to things much worse seems like a step in the wrong direction.
Jared Rathbone	Been taking Kratom for 12 years now and my life's only gotten better. Before Kratom I was hooked on opioids and benzodiazepines and my life was a train wreck. It's in the coffee and tea family and acts most similar to caffeine. Kratom save's lives.
Jason Corey	
Jeffrey Moon	
Jenifer Martin	Ban 7OH and leave natural kratom leaf alone please!! The highly concentrated and potent chemically derived products like 7OH are the problem, not the natural leaf itself
Jennifer Paul	Prohibition is not the answer Responsible usage of the product offers many benefits over risks
Jerry Keehn	
Jessica Lawless	<p>My heart goes out to everyone who has lost a loved one to drug overdose, alcoholism, or suicide. My life has been impacted by these traumatic deaths as well. I use both 7OH and Kratom for chronic pain associated with Crohn's Disease. I strongly oppose bans or criminalization of either. This botanical supports my prescription medications, making it possible for me to fully participate in work and family responsibilities. Before I was using 7OH, I only had partial physical mobility due to nerve pain caused by stress and inflammation. Now, I'm able to walk without a cane, exercise regularly, socialize with friends, and travel - all things that give me an improved quality of life.</p> <p>I urge you to recommend reasonable regulation, not prohibition or criminalization. Prohibition doesn't work and it will result in more tragedies if we don't have this tool for harm reduction and pain relief.</p>



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Jonathan M Christiansen	Hi, I've been proudly alcoholic-free for almost 4 years now and discovered New Brew about a year and a half ago at a family event at Cahuenga General Store. Since quitting alcohol i'd be searching for a beverage to enjoy at social events that can be enjoyed responsibly but actually provides an actual, non-psychedelic mood lift. New Brew is that product. It's helped me stay alcohol free, keeping myself and my family safe through many circumstances where alcohol or marijuana may otherwise create risk. I 100% support reasonable regulation - same as alcohol and marijuana. But New Brew seems (to me) to be a much more sensible and responsible mix of ingredients than something much more powerful like synthetic kratom or Feel Free shots. Creating an aggressive, blanket ban would do more harm than good, in my opinion, to a world already suffering from epidemics of depression, anxiety, alcohol, and substance abuse. Regulated properly, New Brew should be viewed as a resource not a threat. Thank you for your time and consideration to my perspective.
Josh Hartgrove	Putting a natural leaf in the coffee family in the same conversation as a powerful dangerous synthetic substance is not fair to those of us who use and enjoy natural leaf kratom. Whole leaf kratom is not dangerous, the fda, John's Hopkins and many other organizations agree. Kratom is not the problem. Don't ban kratom because of dishonest marketing by shady companies trying to make a buck on the backs of a hard fought kratom industry.
Julie Decker	Natural Kratom has helped my husband and I with severe chronic pain, depression, and anxiety for many, many years. Please, do not take away the natural kratom, that helps so many people.
Justin Kornmann	This is crazy to ban kratom. I use kratom products to help with anxiety. It's extremely helpful to myself and others that I know use kratom products. I completely understand that it can be an addictive substance, but so are cigarettes. So is alcohol, so is weed. So is anything. But like those listed above, they aren't banned, they are regulated. Banning this is just taking it too far which unfortunately, California does too often. Take a step back, and let people decide for themselves in a responsible way. Regulate, don't ban.
Kaden K Bradway	Thanks for hearing us out! Especially since kratom leaf deaths are always mixed with something or in the few cases alone its due to pesticides and heavy metal contamination which is why lab testing and regulation matters!
Kyle Davidson	I've been drinking New Brew (a product containing Kratom) for the better part of the last year. While I only tend to average 2-3 per week, it's had a really positive impact on my life. It eases my anxiety without making me tired, makes me feel more social, helps my brain feel sharp and increases my productivity. I also feel it is a much safer alternative to alcohol and many other substances that are legal and regulated. Kratom should be regulated in a common sense way without a ban. There's no reasonable argument to be made for a ban, with products like alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis etc on the market.
Kyle Najarian	Drinking beverages infused with this supplement as a positive and relaxing



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	effect on my life when using a responsible and present manner
Kyle Olson	
Lauren Shakstad	I am an adult female who has used Kratom responsibly for years. I have never had a single health issue and my medical history has never been even slightly impacted. Kratom has aided in my recovery from alcohol addiction, allowing me to choose sobriety for over 3 years. I know many people who have used Kratom to aide with sobriety alcohol and drugs as well as chronic pain and anxiety disorders. To ban its use because of the reported deaths is a mistake. I am advocating for common sense regulation. I believe banning it completely would negatively impact the positive impact it's made on lives like my own; responsible adults who are using the product to side with ailments and addictions.
LAUREN E ZEPERNICK	No ban should be blanket for an herb that can be healing such as Kratom. Companies like New Brew responsibly make alcohol alternative drinks that offer medicinal and relaxation benefits. Their cans are clearly labeled in the effective and proper way to consume their product. They clearly state that it should not be consumed consecutively and it should not be combined with any other substance to enjoy it to the best ability. As a nutritionist who knows exactly how harmful alcohol is in all forms on the body, it is important to have alcohol alternative drinks for the community to enjoy. Many studies have shown how poorly alcohol affects the body such as Alzheimer's and Cancer. New Brews ingredients have been shown to help the body if consumed properly. Thank you!
Leila m m	I'm a chronic pain patient who had already had pain meds restricted, please don't take away the only thing that helps my pain.
Lydia Arguelles	Dear Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to respectfully share my personal experience with kratom and to urge consideration of thoughtful regulation rather than an outright ban. As someone living with arthritis, I had been reliant on prescription medications for pain management. Through the responsible use of natural, regulated kratom, I have been able to significantly reduce—and in some cases eliminate—my dependence on those medications. Kratom has also helped improve my sleep during perimenopause, a time when many women struggle to find safe and effective support. Additionally, kratom has played an unexpected but meaningful role in helping me cut back on unhealthy alcohol habits. In my experience, alcohol poses far greater health and safety risks than kratom, both personally and from a broader public health perspective. Having access to a regulated alternative has supported healthier choices rather than riskier ones. Banning a product that other countries and states have successfully regulated would likely drive consumer demand toward unregulated or illicit markets, reducing safety and oversight rather than improving it. Regulation—such as quality control, age limits, and clear labeling—offers a more productive and



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responsible approach that prioritizes public health while respecting personal autonomy.

I appreciate your time and your commitment to evidence-based policy decisions that consider the real-life impacts on community members.

Respectfully,
Lydia Arguelles

Margaret Zepernick	<p>Kratom has helped me drink so much less alcohol as it doesn't give me hangovers like alcohol does and it helps my anxiety as I'm a very anxious person. There need to be regulations but banning it is not the answer! It is still a plant and in my case a type of medicine. Not only does it help my anxiety but it helps my body pain since I suffer from chronic pain.</p>
Mark Ramos	<p>I support banning or tightly regulating 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) extracts and other concentrated or semi-synthetic kratom products, which are chemically and pharmacologically distinct from traditional kratom leaf. Treating them as equivalent is misleading.</p> <p>I am not dependent on kratom and can easily go without it when necessary. My concern is reasonable, targeted regulation. A blanket ban on natural kratom leaf would remove a lower-risk, plant-based option used responsibly by many, while failing to address the primary risks associated with high-potency extracts.</p>
Maxine Vivanco	<p>New Brew uses kratom leaf as opposed to synthetic products like 7-OH. I do support better regulation of potent forms of 7-OH kratom for safety. Instead of a full ban better regulation and testing of products should suffice. I am an artist who uses many mediums, I find that when I drink New Brew, my creativity just flows. When I have a New Brew, I do not feel unstable like when I drink alcohol, my hands are steady and my mind is clear, I just feel less stressed. I do not enjoy cannabis or THC because I am very sensitive to it and fear I may have a bad reaction given my family history. Alcohol and THC/cannabis products are notoriously known to have bad after effects, I personally feel very sick and depressed. New Brew does not have any effect on me.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to hear from me.</p>
Melissa Scaduto	<p>Kratom has helped me quit drinking and doing other harmful drugs for the last few years. It can be abused like anything legal, and I believe that this is big alcohol business coming after kratom. As it is not a public health concern in any different way than occasional drinking!</p>
Micah Sims	<p>Natural kratom products have literally saved my life. With small, intentionally-timed doses of kratom, I was able to overcome a crippling addiction to alcohol that would have otherwise led me to an early grave. There is certainly a need for regulation and use by adults only, but at low doses it can have powerful positive effects like it has in my life, not only for addiction, but for mood, focus and energy. I am strongly opposed to an outright prohibition and strongly in support of regulation and oversight of distribution of kratom products, with a</p>



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	preferred incentive for natural versus synthetic products.
Michael Bochey	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Michael Andrew Bochey, and I am a firefighter-paramedic with the City of Los Angeles. I believe it would be helpful for decision-makers to hear directly from an LA City firefighter with firsthand experience responding to overdoses and managing occupational injuries.</p> <p>I am writing because from both a public-health and emergency-medicine perspective, it is obvious that prohibition has not worked, and repeating it with 7-OH or kratom will predictably worsen the problems the County is trying to address.</p> <p>Every shift, firefighters and paramedics respond to overdoses. Over the years, we have watched the drug supply become progressively more dangerous despite prohibition. The progression is clear and measurable: morphine and heroin gave way to fentanyl, fentanyl to carfentanil, then xylazine entered the picture, and most recently in Los Angeles we are now seeing nitazenes detected in counterfeit pain pills sold as oxycodone. Compounds such as isotonitazepene are reported to be many times more potent than fentanyl. 7-OH provides an alternative that we are NOT seeing overdoses of. Without 7-OH available, users will inevitably move towards illicit-market drugs with unknown potency and purity, effectively playing Russian roulette with their lives. This escalation is the predictable outcome of prohibition. When access is restricted, the market shifts toward stronger, cheaper, and easier-to-smuggle drugs, which dramatically increases overdose risk and mortality. This is exactly what firefighters and paramedics are responding to on the street.</p> <p>To put it as blatantly as possible: a 7-OH ban will result in avoidable deaths.</p> <p>I also want to speak directly to how 7-OH and kratom can be relevant to firefighters and other physically demanding professions. Firefighting routinely results in back, joint, and musculoskeletal injuries. Many firefighters are first exposed to opioids through legitimate medical treatment for work-related injuries, not through recreational use. While people often cite this pathway when discussing opioid addiction, what is rarely mentioned is that the vast majority of people who are prescribed opioids do not become addicted. Addiction is not an automatic or inevitable outcome of exposure.</p> <p>As articulated by researchers and writers such as Johann Hari and LA Native, Dr. Carl Hart, addiction is deeply tied to trauma, isolation, lack of purpose, and disconnection, in addition to any physiological dependence that may occur. The pharmacological mechanism alone does not cause addiction, and policy that focuses only on banning substances ignores the underlying drivers entirely.</p> <p>For some firefighters, kratom-derived products function as harm-reduction tools, helping manage pain while avoiding or reducing reliance on full opioid</p>



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agonists. This matters from an overdose-prevention standpoint. Full opioid agonists are strongly associated with respiratory depression, especially when combined with alcohol or benzodiazepines, combinations we frequently see involved in fatal overdoses.

From a pharmacological standpoint, 7-OH does not recruit beta-arrestin in the same way as traditional opioids, a pathway that has been associated with respiratory depression. This means that it has a different risk profile, one that should be addressed through science-based regulation, consumer education, and more research, not blanket bans that push people toward unregulated and far more dangerous alternatives.

As a firefighter-paramedic, I strongly support education around addiction potential, appropriate dosing, and the dangers of combining substances, particularly depressants like alcohol and benzodiazepines. Education saves lives. Prohibition does not. We already know this from decades of evidence and from what we are seeing unfold in real time on our streets.

Criminalizing or banning 7-OH or kratom will not eliminate demand for pain relief or self-medication. It will simply push people into illicit markets, where potency, contamination, and dosing are unknown, increasing the likelihood of overdose and death.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge Los Angeles County to:

- Reject efforts to ban or criminalize 7-OH or kratom
- Pursue evidence-based regulation focused on safety, testing, labeling, and age limits
- Emphasize education, treatment access, and harm reduction over enforcement
- Avoid repeating prohibition policies that have already worsened the overdose crisis

Thank you for considering the perspective of a working firefighter-paramedic who sees the real-world consequences of these policy decisions every day.

Sincerely,
Michael Andrew Bochey
Firefighter-Paramedic, City of Los Angeles

Michael Brandt	Kratom should be regulated, not banned. It's a vital and safe replacement for alcohol.
Michael Felicetta	Pure leaf kratom is safe and it has saved my life. Prohibiting those who use pure leaf is wrong. Ban 7oh not kratom. I was an iv drug user and kratom saved my life.8 years clean
Michael OConnor	Please do not approve this ban! Kratom/7-OH is an occasional and wonderful benefit to my life. People can and will abuse any kind of substance. Alcohol kills 3 million people a year but it's been deemed socially acceptable. Don't



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	<p>punish the majority for the mistakes of the very few!</p>
Michael Reising	<p>Dear sirs and madams,</p> <p>I am a California resident and frequently travel through Los Angeles. I am opposed to a ban on kratom, a supplement, that I have been enjoying for over 16 years legally in this state. Regulation of kratom products makes more sense as history has proven prohibition does not and never has worked in any capacity.</p> <p>I am a 51 year old teacher who enjoys kratom tea in the evenings to help me unwind. I believe it is safer and much healthier than alcohol. As a result, I no longer drink as much alcohol as I used to; and my overall health has improved. Please do not take away my right - and the rights of tens of thousands of Californian - to make our own choices about living a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>Remember kratom has been used safely for thousands of years throughout Indonesia and science has proven that it is safe.</p> <p>Warmly, Mike Reising</p>
Michele Ross	
Naomi Oleson	I was in a 15 year long addiction to methamphetamine. 6 years ago I found Kratom and I now work at an elementary school
Nicholas Harris	I wholeheartedly believe in regulation for Kratom, not a full on ban. I have chronic pain throughout my body and Kratom has helped tremendously unlike anything else I have used and tried for pain relief in so that I can get back to living the life that I lived before my injuries that led to the chronic pain. With Kratom, I am able to stay on my feet and work and be a contributing member to society in a way that I was not able to before I started using Kratom. I used to be an alcoholic, and ever since I discovered Kratom, my cravings and taste for alcohol have completely vanished and I haven't touched the stuff in almost Two years now thanks to Kratom. I got my life back because of it as have so many other people. I urge you, I beg you, please do not ban Kratom. Regulate it. It has helped myself and so many others get their lives back. Thank you.
nick smaldino	Regulation, not prohibition. If you prohibit Kratom and 7-OH it will lead to increased illegal activity and MORE deaths from recovering fentanyl and heroin addicts.
Nick Wronski	I'm a paramedic of 15 years and a hospital pharmacy tech of 5 years, I have been taking regular plain leaf kratom for over 6 years with absolutely no medical complications, side effects nor does it get you high or intoxicated. If it weren't for regular kratom, I would have never gotten free from oxycodone and I would 100% be dead by now from an overdose! I also have had crippling anxiety my entire adult life, and kratom has tremendously curbed my



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		<p>anxiety so I can focus and do my job at the highest capacity! Please do not ban regular plain leaf kratom, on ban the 7 hydroxy!</p>
	Nikki Walker	<p>I am a 35 year old woman who is a severe chronic pain patient who lived in California most of my life who now lives in Georgia, who has been taking plain leaf kratom & occasional small amounts of extract for extra bad flare days, since earlier last year. I have had this condition for around 11 years. Tests had been done by my doctors over the years and nothing has done much to help it, with treatment consisting of various medications, vitamins, balms, and most other various attempts over the years that barely make even a small dent in my pain. I had absolutely no quality of life, could not enjoy anything or have personal passions, and cannot work. The pain is so bad that I struggle to even describe it, & without medicinal help it is the worst pain I can imagine. I can't even shower myself without needing almost a week to recover. Opioids were always the only thing that ever made a small amount of relief, especially with how few pills people like me are allowed now (thanks to overcorrection policies leading everyone who genuinely need these meds to be treated like junkie drug seekers by everyone). I was completely fed up with all of this after all these years and completely without hope, deciding that suicide was my only option... Until I discovered kratom. Kratom not only helps with my pain in the way I always needed, but it also helps my mood, and the relief is much cleaner and less surface level than opioids (which I was never made very functional on) for me and other chronic pain patients. People especially in government see us chronic pain patients as worthless human collateral, enthusiastically sacrificed in favor of this unrelenting crusade against all opioids, and now kratom- a reason many of us are even still alive and a blessing to many of us who before had no hope that are now healthier because of it. So many are taking advantage of the inch that was given with intention to take the full mile, spreading misinformation and ignorance, and demonizing all its alkaloids and tricking people into thinking synthetics and kratom are identical- a harmful lie that is harming all that finally have quality of life from this blessing of a plant. I know we don't have power and a lot of money like pharmaceutical companies do, but I'd like to think our lives still have worth- and so many (including the few thoughtless & irresponsible who cause the many thousands of responsible users so much damage that we have been casually lumped in with) are being so willing to sacrifice all of us. I know doners often mean more to many in the government than people like me, but find some compassion somewhere and think of us.</p>
	Peter Cheng	<p>I support banning or restricting 7-OH but this is not the same as Kratom. Both chemically and in their effects. Kratom should not be treated treated the same as 7-OH so it should not be restricted or banned.</p>
	Philip Sorley	<p>Of course we want to prevent deaths, but there is a reasonable way to limit Kratom just like every other county, and if max kratom %'s are in the restrictions, that will help many people choose that drink instead of alcohol. Just like alcohol, a BAC of 0.01 doesn't cause the issues we're talking about. Rather it is only the higher % levels that cause the issue. Responsible limitations on beverages is the right way to go, not a blanket ban. All the other counties have done this and have seen the positive results.</p>



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Rachel Morgan	
Rachelle L Escobar	
Rae Saudade	I don't believe there is enough evidence to show that kratom or 7-OH alone causes overdoses. I also feel that outright bans do nothing to help consumer safety, they just open up a further unregulated black market for the same substances. I do not support a ban, but I do support more research on kratom and 7-OH alone, without the presence of alcohol, medications, and illicit substances.
Randal Bitters	You think you have homeless drug addicts and death now takeaway an affordable SAFE option from those of us who use kratom to stay off opioids and other drugs. I lived on the streets of San Diego in the early 1980s Kratom helps ensure I'm don't go back on drugs and the streets of California. Please listen to AKA. Please vote no to restricting KRATOM.
Rebekah Miller	Kratom has had a positive impact on my life by helping me regulate my nervous system and find a sense of calm during periods of stress. In my experience, it has been a supportive, plant-based option that I use responsibly. I do not believe kratom should be banned outright, especially when many widely available substances, such as alcohol, carry well-documented risks. I do support reasonable regulation and quality standards to ensure safety, transparency, and responsible access. Thank you for your consideration.
Rick S Weiner	Kratom has substantially reduced my alcohol consumption which has been a huge positive for my personal life and I believe that products such as New Brew are beneficial to those who use as it promotes a healthy and natural alternative that makes meaningful and impactful improvements to well being. A complete ban makes little sense in my opinion and would welcome LA adopting similiar restrictions such as age as your neighboring counties.
Robert Cruz	New Brew, the Euphoric Seltzer containing Kratom, has help me stay drug free as I am in recovery. Drinking New Brew responsibly has helped me with depression and anxiety.
Robert Cooper Reedy	Kratom has positively impacted my life, it helps me become social and easygoing while avoiding the effects of alcohol. Banning kratom is not the solution and you guys know that. It is about regulation and moderation which you guys have need to focus on, it isn't rocket science! I'm younger than all of you guys and can see how banning something doesn't have any affect.
Rose Pajcin	I implore you to not ban Kratom. I am 77 years old. I have been suffering from severe chronic pain for over 25 years. My doctors have tried everything, from a morphine pump implant to pills and liquids and patches; nothing has worked as well as natural Kratom. Kratom has saved my life, restored my mind from the opioids, and given me hope to live. Truly I tell you if Kratom was banned, I'd be in dire shape. Even the mere idea of banning it is a form of torture because doctors will not prescribe opioids. I assure you if the natural form of Kratom is banned it will cause MORE deaths, either from people turning to illegal drug use to make up for the loss of Kratom, or from suicide from the pain. Plus there are people who are using it to stay off harder drugs like



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	<p>heroin; by banning natural Kratom, I assure you they will become desperate and turn to hard illegal drugs again. A ban on Kratom would be catastrophic.</p> <p>Go ahead and ban the synthetic version, which I never took and never plan to take, and go ahead and put age restrictions (21 years or older), but I beg you (for those of you who are blessed with good health) do not ban the natural form of Kratom that has been used for centuries to alleviate pain. Kratom has saved my life, please do not take it away.</p>
Scott Cernetic	I have lived in California for the past 31 years. I have raised a family here and own property here. Much of that time I lived in LA County, but I left because I watched it deteriorate around me and my family. Admittedly LA County has many problems, but Kratom/7-OH is not one of them. There are not people living on the streets due to Kratom/7-OH. There are not people dying due to Kratom/7-OH. In fact more people are injured and killed each year due to Tylenol than have ever been injured or killed by Kratom/7-OH. This proposed ban will not enhance the lives of those living in LA County. This strikes me as an over reaction based on fear and not the facts and science. I know many people who have used Kratom/7-OH in order to stop using dangerous illicit drugs and pharmaceutical products. As a former resident of LA County I oppose this measure as it will hurt the residents of LA County and set a dangerous precedent for other counties in California.
Sean P Griffin	I am writing to oppose a full ban of Kratom products. I enjoy low dose kratom beverages like New Brew. I find them to be a safe alternative to alcohol. I would support a ban of high dose kratom or 7-OH products that are significantly less safe, but the ban should be based on dosage and not just on whether the product has kratom or not.
Shannon OLeary	My name is Shannon OLeary. I live in Los Angeles. Kratom and 7-OH has helped me manage a crippling anxiety disorder. A ban on both kratom leaf and 7-OH would harm people like me, who use these substances responsibly. I urge you to oppose this proposal and choose smart, science-based regulation instead of a ban. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.
Soren Shade	Prohibition never works, regulate instead. People die from consuming illegal drugs, despite them being prohibited. Therefore prohibition doesn't necessarily save lives. Regulations minimizes harms and optimizes for optimal outcomes.
Stephanie R Salsman	I'm writing to oppose the misleading proposal of item number 12. I am a lifelong California resident, and a responsible pure leaf Kratom consumer. I have chronic pain that I've dealt with for years and this leaf in its raw form when used responsibly helps me and countless others. I agree with the fda on banning 7oh and synthetics, but not the pure leaf. The fda even stated back in July that they weren't going after the leaf. I am all for regulation, but I believe adults should have the choice to use a tea especially when substances like alcohol and tobacco remain accessible. Thank you.
Steven Rawls	This is severe government overreach. You can't lump the 2 together. The natural Kratom is totally different than the high potency synthetic 7-OH. It's been used for 100's if not 1000's of years to treat a variety of conditions.



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Limit it to 21+ of limit the potency. A blanket ban will just push people to the black market. The unintended consequences of a ban are unsafe alternatives that could leave to MORE deaths. Use common sense like Riverside and Orange County.

Steven Weighton	<p>Kratom and 7-Hydroxymitragynine are not equivalent substances.</p> <p>Kratom is a natural substance that has been utilized by numerous individuals on a daily basis. It is essential to distinguish between these two products. In favor of the prohibition of 7-Hydroxymitragynine, while opposing the prohibition of Kratom.</p> <p>This comparison is analogous to the distinction between real cannabis and synthetic cannabis.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Theodore Nguyen	<p>Kratom has had many health benefits for me and has really improved my mental health, and I have stopped consuming alcohol completely. When made responsibly it is safe, and does not alter your state of mind the way alcohol or other legal substances do, including marijuana.</p>
Tonya Brauch	<p>I am writing to urge you NOT to impose a blanket ban on all kratom products in LA County.</p> <p>I personally decided to make some healthy life changes last year - the main one being to cut down my alcohol consumption. I was drinking wine most days and a lot on the weekends so did dry January to jump start my healthier year. I was looking for alternatives, like beverages with natural botanicals, adaptogens, cbd etc. That was when I found NEW BREW euphoric seltzer. It was the perfect sparkling botanical that gave me that lift without any of the negative effects I experienced from alcohol. Since then I have dramatically decreased the amount of alcohol I drink (only a glass of wine or a drink here or there when out with friends or at an event or party) and it has made a huge positive impact on my life and health. The New Brew is mild, I drink one or two and it calms me, gives me focus, and eases my social anxiety (a big reason why I was drinking so much alcohol). I can honestly say that my physical and mental health from a year ago until now is 100x better and I contribute much of that to my switch away from alcohol, and New Brew helped me do that.</p> <p>I firmly believe that adults should have access to responsible alternatives to alcohol, and those products should be accessible with common sense regulation. The small amounts of NATURAL kratom in New Brew is well below the responsible limit of 7-OH which this proposed legislation relates to. Yes, there are irresponsible products out there with synthetically produced and/or high levels of 7-OH, and reasonable regulations should be put into place such as 21+ labeling, independent product testing, not marketing the products to children etc.</p> <p>I believe it is wrong to put an outright ban on any product that contains</p>



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			<p>kratom. As an adult, I should be able to make decisions on what products are right for me as long as the products available are responsibly produced.</p> <p>In comparison, cigarettes are still sold in every corner store. Because they have a label warning they can cause many health issues, and with age limits, so only adults can purchase them. Making their own decision as an adult. Same thing with alcohol. Comes with age limits and some regulations on labeling.</p> <p>This legislation says "preventing deaths related to kratom and 7-OH" - and that is a great thing to prevent - but how many people have died from cigarettes and alcohol compared to deaths from 7-OH products?</p> <p>I don't believe an outright ban is the solution. These deaths (which I haven't seen the date for by the way) could be prevented simply by passing common sense regulation to keep the dangerous synthetic 7-OH products off the shelves without harming those who produce and use the products responsibly.</p> <p>I'm asking you to support common-sense regulation — just like Riverside County, Orange County, Fresno County, and many others across California have already done — and which the state is on its way to passing through AB1088.</p> <p>Thank you! Tonya Brauch, Santa Monica, CA</p>
	Venus Usher		<p>Hello, my name is Venus Usher, and I am a resident of New Castle, Delaware.</p> <p>I am submitting this comment because many LA County residents may not realize that this ban is happening. I also have family and friends I like to visit once we have regulations in place.</p> <p>For nearly a decade, I have relied on plain leaf kratom tea as my sole source of pain relief. It allows me to manage serious chronic conditions without resorting to opioids or other high-risk medications. Access to safe, regulated kratom is critical for people like me. I couldnt function on opiates. Policies that limit availability or create unnecessary barriers put patients' health and quality of life at risk. Mine was, before plain leaf kratom tea. I urge the Board to support measures that ensure the safety and legal access of kratom while protecting vulnerable patients, opposing those bills that ban. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
	William E Power		<p>75 year old veteran with 8 years benefitting from powdered Kratom daily, ADHD no longer an issue. I will leave the state if uniformed overworked lawmakers choose to ban Kratom Powder thinking their helping instead of banning the engineered harmful derivative 07-H. Too many veterans need this helpful natural medication vs pharmaceutical psychoactive drugs</p>
Other	Allison Smith		<p>Please protect access to natural kratom products by instituting a 2% limit on 7</p>



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		<p>-OH content. We need regulation that follows state and federal direction - not blanket bans that impact access to safe, natural kratom. Please consider an age-gate on sales for 21+ and labeling/packaging requirements.</p>
Ashley Davidson		<p>I just wanted to say this plant, Kratom, saved my life. I have severe agoraphobia, I'm disabled and for a long time could not even leave my house for Dr appointments or dental care. My medication causes severe dry mouth which in turn causes damage and rapid tooth decay, not being able to get to the dentist was horrific. Since I found Kratom I have been able to get to the dentist, they were able to save my teeth after lots of work and many trips which I never could have tolerated without Kratom. No medication has worked and they come with scary side effects, Kratom has been gentle and I have found it to be completely safe. It has a built in ceiling effect that prevents abuse and it doesn't cause breathing depression. I am completely functional while using it, I have a chance at life again, a chance to participate and contribute, I was able to visit my elderly father which is priceless to me, thinking the plant that saved me could be banned breaks my heart and scares me. This is reefer madness all over again, there is plenty of scientific evidence backing up the safety of Kratom in its natural form, Kratom is not what people pushing for a ban say it is. A ban would literally just pry the tea from the arthritic hands of the elderly. Please have mercy and don't take away the only thing that helps so many people from all walks of life.</p>
Billy Rowlett		<p>Please ban 7OH and leave plain leaf kratom to be regulated. Kratom has saved many people's lives and continues to do so everyday. All synthetic versions should be illegal and banned. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Bobby Hubbard		<p>Please please know the difference in Kratom and 7OH. Kratom powder saved my life!!! Without it I would be bedridden!!!</p>
Brandon Betancourt		<p>Hello, I am writing to show support for responsible kratom users of Los Angeles.</p> <p>Kratom has saved my life, helped me to get clean from highly addictive and dangerous pain medications and has helped me to become a productive, tax paying member of society.</p> <p>I have a degenerative tissue disorder that has caused me constant pain for over 20 years. I've pursued every available medical treatment, but unfortunately our medical system has not only failed to help me, it has made me much worse. My experience with using legal, doctor prescribed pain medications and muscle relaxers left me with serious health problems, crippling addictions, toxic reactions, and even overdose.</p> <p>Finding kratom literally saved my life. I'm sure I would be dead right now if I had continued taking the pills the doctors gave me. Kratom has also helped me kick a decades long addiction to alcohol. Not only has kratom kept me sober for years, it has completely eliminated my desire to drink. I think that alone is a miracle.</p>



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	<p>I am not a drug addict, but I do know what addiction to drugs is like- and our health care system is directly responsible for that. This is why I'm advocating for kratom- a safe and natural way for people like myself to treat chronic pain.</p> <p>If kratom is banned, thousands of people will be forced to return to using dangerous, highly addictive and destructive substances. Overdoses and suicides will rise. We should have the right to choose what we put in our bodies. It is wrong to prevent access to a life saving plant like kratom. Please ban only 7-OH and leave plain leaf kratom alone.</p>
Brittany Brown	<p>It's helping people . There is no reason for it be banned . The people that are dying are multi-substance users and had other stuff in their system that killed them . So many people have changed their life around for the better because of Kratom !</p>
Brittany A Sefton	<p>Please ban 7OH and leave plain leaf kratom to be regulated. Kratom has saved many people's lives and continues to do so everyday. All synthetic versions should be illegal and banned. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Bunny Baker	<p>Hello, my name is Bunny Baker and I'm Tulare County Ca</p> <p>Pure, plain leaf powder Kratom has had a profoundly positive impact on my quality of life. Before I started using it, I had been diagnosed with severe depression and struggled with chronic migraines. My days were often spent in bed, exhausted and unmotivated. I felt disconnected from my family and from life itself.</p> <p>Since incorporating kratom into my wellness routine, I've experienced a complete turnaround. My energy levels have improved dramatically, and my migraines have become far less frequent. Most importantly, the heavy cloud of depression that once controlled my life has lifted. I now wake up feeling motivated and capable.</p> <p>I'm an involved mother, a supportive wife, and an active member of my community. I've been able to return to regular exercise, eat healthier, and live fully again—something I never thought I'd be able to say.</p> <p>Kratom hasn't just improved my mood; it's given me back my sense of purpose, balance, and well-being. It's helped me reduce dependence on antidepressants and reconnect with life in a natural, sustainable way.</p> <p>7oh is Not kratom</p> <p>Please regulate and keep lab tested plain leaf kratom legal.</p> <p>Thank you, Bunny Baker</p>



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Carlie Duval	7oh is an isolated synthesized alkaloid of the kratom leaf plant. It should not be placed in the same category or sentence as kratom unless being used in an educational manner. 7oh is present in kratom leaf in as little as 0.001% by weight and kratom leaf poses almost none of the risks as 7oh isolate. To analogize, it's like saying light beer is the same thing as moonshine and that it should all be banned. Please do not let the media sway this bill. Do YOUR research. Kratom saves lives. 7oh is a legal substitute for full agonist opioids and creates physical dependences with TERRIBLE withdrawals similar or worse to that of heroin or fentanyl. Please, do not place them in the same category.
Cheryl Senese	I am a responsible Kratom user. Kratom saved my life from a Fentanyl addiction. Had I not discovered its healing properties I would be dead! Cheryl Senese
Christopher D Deaney	Natural kratom consumer
Daniel M Gliksman	While I am for banning 7-OH for its addictive potential it should be noted that all of the deaths involved other substances and it is not lethal on its own. This is especially true for kratom which has significantly less addictive potential and is genuinely very helpful for a lot of people who suffer with chronic pain. It is significantly milder than 7-OH and should not be lumped in with it. Banning kratom over this would be throwing the baby out with the bath water.
Danielle Allum	I use kratom, never tried 7-OH which is not actually kratom. I've been a chronic pain patient for nearly 20 years. Was stable on opiate medications until Covid hit& my treating dr suddenly retired & I was suddenly cut off of my medication without warning. I couldn't find another dr willing to treat me. I became very sick& severely depressed. I started drinking booze as my only pain relief. But that eventually made me feel even worse. I became suicidal & attempted suicide on more than one occasion & very nearly succeeded. In 2021 I found a dr who was willing to treat my pain with buprenorphine,as an off label treatment for my pain. I am grateful to that dr for at least giving me something as opposed to nothing. However buprenorphine comes with many negative side effects. When my teeth started crumbling, that was it for me. I wanted off it no matter what. I tried repeatedly to get off it on my own but it was literally impossible. Until I found natural plain leaf powder to get off buprenorphine which gave me full blown withdrawals for 61 days. Without kratom I have no doubt I would not be alive today. I still deal w/ pain but kratom helps just enough that it prevents me from going back into a suicidal depression. -Side note . I'm not against 7-OH if it is properly regulated & there is complete transparency to the public of what it actually is & isn't from said companies. It should NEVER be labeled & sold as kratom. The label should be honest& there should be a warning on it. But it's very scarey to be a person in physical pain for whatever reason in America right now. People can't get pain meds for appropriate conditions& are left to suffer some so much to the point they're blowing their head off or drinking themselves to death. So, if there is a place for 7-OH for someone who had no other



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	<p>reasonable option for relief, & they understand what it is they are taking& can be responsible for what they choose to put in their own body, I'm not going to be in the way of that just bc I don't personally use 7-OH. Maybe bc I understand really suffering. Regardless of this, natural kratom is not 7-OH & kratom helps literally millions of people live a decent quality of life that they would not have without it. There's a lot of misinformation about kratom. I wish that there would be more education about it& that voices like mine actually matter& make a difference. Thank u for your time</p>
Debora A Bielski	<p>Please don't ban Kratom it's given me my life back I have RSD in my right leg .. Kratom helps me to get out of bed to complete daily tasks. Kratom helped me get off of pain medication that wasn't helping. Please don't ban Kratom. Thank you</p>
Denise Geltman	<p>Hi. My name is Denise Geltman and I've been taking Natural Leaf Kratom for 10 years. It is my most important tool in my chronic pain toolbox. I suffer from fibromyalgia, severe IBS and migraines and due to these things I have chronic nerve pain and spasms. It's torture for me and NATURAL LEAF KRATOM makes my pain bearable. I have even held a part time job for the past 10 years due to NATURAL LEAF Kratom.</p> <p>Please keep NATURAL LEAF KRATOM available for citizens of Los Angeles County. It helps so many people. And it helps the LA economy and community when people like me can contribute to them.</p> <p>However I hope you ban all 7-OH products. They are very dangerous and can cause respiratory depression, which NATURAL LEAF KRATOM does NOT cause according to the US Government patent on the Alkaloids in Kratom</p> <p>The 7-OH advocates keep comparing 7-OH to NATURAL LEAF KRATOM when they know this is not true. They don't care about their customers. They just want to make as much money as possible for themselves. 7-OH dissipates within minutes of cutting the Kratom Leaves. 7-OH must immediately be harvested or it disappears. They outright lie about it remaining in NATURAL LEAF KRATOM.</p> <p>The FDA has found that NATURAL LEAF KRATOM is SAFE in ALL doses according to Dr. Gupta of the Biden Administration</p> <p>And in November 2024, Dr. Scott Gottlieb formerly of the FDA, went directly to the UN/WHO and ask them to ban NATURAL LEAF KRATOM worldwide and they said NO. They said it helps too many people.</p> <p>Please do not consider banning Natural Leaf Kratom. Instead it would be great if you regulate it so it has high quality standards for consumers like myself.</p> <p>Thank you for your kind consideration of my requests.</p>



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Diana Roby	
Dustin Shetler	Kratom in its natural leaf form has helped me tremendously in my quality of life. I oppose any ban on natural relief kratom. however, I do favor the ban of any synthetics.
Dylan Smith	Please regulate and protect natural leaf Kratom
Elizabeth Avalos	Kratom has saved so many lives, mine included. This is a miracle plant. I do not think Kratom need a ban but I do think synthetics should be banned.
Glenn Johnson	
Heidi A Sykora	I am offering scientific evidence and assistance in developing regulation.
Jayna Blassingame	Kratom is a plant that has been used traditionally in Southeast Asia for generations. Many adults report using it as an alternative to more harmful substances, which is why some public health experts argue that banning it outright could do more harm than good.
Jayson R Woodall Jayson R Woodall	The Board needs to go after 7-Hydroxy and NOT leaf kratom. Kratom in its pure form has helped me by giving me my quality of life back since the Federal Government has put limitations on prescribed pain management medications, the chronic pain community had to turn somewhere for help in managing our pain. Kratom in its pure form has given so many of us our lives back in a natural way. 7-Hydroxy is NOT a true form of kratom, and that is what needs to be looked into for a ban.
Jennifer Mercier	Please regulate keeping whole leaf safe and accessible!
Jessica L Dunkin	
Joe VanDervort	Natural plain leaf kratom helped save my life from dangerous illicit drugs. I'm all in favor of banning all of the synthetics and analogues, but please keep plain kratom leaf legal!
John Scagliano	Ban 7oh. But leave natural plain leaf alone. A lot of people use it to be productive members of society. Banning nature seems unnatural.
Jordan Martin	Please ban 7OH and all synthetics, but please keep natural, raw kratom legal and available. It's the only thing that helps me function with my chronic pain, as well as the sever anxiety I suffer from. Natural leaf isn't the problem.. it's all of these synthetics! Let's ban them.. and make them illegal!
Jordan Richard	To the Members of the Council / Board, My name is Jordan Richard. I am the author of The Truth About Kratom: Life-Saving Plant or Botanical Menace? and I am currently working on a documentary film examining kratom through scientific research, regulatory history, and firsthand investigation. I have already traveled to Indonesia, where kratom has been used by millions of people for hundreds of years as part of daily life and labor. Public records and available reporting show zero documented deaths attributed to kratom alone throughout Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. I will also be traveling



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to Thailand in approximately two weeks to continue documenting kratom's historical use and modern regulatory framework. A simple review of publicly available data shows that, despite long-standing widespread use across the region, kratom has not produced a single mortality which is being claimed in the United States.

I am writing to urge an evidence-based approach to kratom policy: regulate natural kratom leaf while banning high-potency 7-hydroxy-mitragynine (7-OH) products.

Natural kratom is a whole-plant botanical containing dozens of naturally occurring alkaloids. 7-hydroxy-mitragynine is not a naturally occurring alkaloid in the kratom plant. It is a metabolite of mitragynine that exists only in extremely trace amounts and is not present in meaningful concentrations in raw kratom leaf. Products marketed as "7-OH" require artificial concentration or chemical conversion and represent a fundamentally different substance than traditional kratom.

This distinction aligns with the federal government's current position. In 2024, the FDA released its first comprehensive human-focused study on kratom and concluded that kratom appears to be safe, even at very high dose levels. FDA leadership has repeatedly stated that their concern is not traditional kratom leaf, but high-potency synthetic or semi-synthetic derivatives. California's current approach increasingly conflicts with this federal guidance.

There is now a large body of peer-reviewed scientific research supporting the relative safety of natural kratom when properly regulated. Sensible policy should focus on age restrictions, product testing, labeling standards, and contaminant controls, while explicitly banning synthetic or artificially concentrated 7-OH products.

I respectfully urge you to regulate natural kratom leaf and ban 7-hydroxy products in order to protect public health while remaining consistent with science, history, and federal guidance.

Sincerely,
Jordan Richard

Jordan R Ginevan Kratom has saved mine and my husband's life. It's been 3 years now since we started the Krstom journey. I never thought we'd be where we are now. I've had 6 years "sober" but 3 of those years were on MAT. I couldn't do MAT anymore. It made me a zombie. Now I live a normal life. Better yet my whole family lives a normal life. It was so hard. The clinic I went to refused to taper me down. Everytime I asked they had an excuse and sometimes would up my dose. So I started tapering myself. But once I got down to an 1/8 of a sub a day I was terrified to go completely off. Cause I went without before and it was horrible. I came across one of New Hope Botanical's videos and within a month I made the jump. We felt so trapped. I wish to this day I would have just dealt with withdrawals instead of being talked into going to a clinic. It



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Correspondence Received

works for some people but but definitely not all. I was sober from street drugs but it didn't feel like being sober at all. I take Kratom twice a day. My blood work is always perfect. I've had 0 adverse effects. 7-OH and Pure Kratom leaf are NOT the same thing.

Kevin J Boryca Kratom and 7oh are completely different. The FDA studied kratom and found it does not meet the criteria to be scheduled.

Lesley G Thomas I oppose a ban on natural leaf Kratom. It's been such a lifesaver for me. It helps pain. It helps depression, and it's helped many alcoholics and addicts get off the drugs or booze that will eventually kill them. Regular plain leaf kratom is not lethal. If you prohibition it many, many people will be harm or criminalize . STOP the ban on kratom.

Lora S Romney As a chronic pain patient, 9-year kratom consumer, and president of International Plant & Herbal Alliance, I am encouraging you as leaders of Los Angeles to draft and enact responsible kratom regulation for your city. Currently there is no regulation in place to protect consumers. Good regulation allows natural leaf kratom products to be available to consumers (like myself) who rely on kratom for their health and well being. In addition, appropriate regulation sets a limit on the amount of 7-hydroxymitragynine that is allowed in a product. This prevents synthetic products from being sold. Products like 7-OH have no safety record and no science to back their use. Plus these products have been shown to cause a quick dependency.

Simply removing all kratom and synthetic products from the shelves will be disastrous for many. Kratom consumers who use this supplement for pain control will be at risk if these products are not available. Pain patients are unable to access many prescription pain meds due to the opioid crisis, and alternatives like kratom can mean life!

The FDA and HHS made it very clear on July 29, 2025 that they do not want natural leaf kratom scheduled...only 7-OH. Then on Jan 29. 2026 President Trump announced a new drug policy initiative where he plainly stated yet again that the concern is over 7-OH and other synthetics. Synthetics are the products causing deaths in your city and in surrounding areas. Especially if they involve other substances like polydrug use or alcohol. These products are extremely strong and do not belong on store shelves.

I educate localities all around the country about kratom and how to responsibly regulate. Please draft an ordinance that includes the following:

- 1) Age restriction (typically 21+)
- 2) Strict GMP regulations for safe packaging and distribution.
- 3) Appropriate labeling based on requirements for dietary supplements: ingredients, serving size, warnings, etc.
- 4) Language that restricts the amount of 7-hydroxymitragynine (or other synthetic kratom derivatives) allowed in the product. This will mirror the FDA's recommendation from the July 29 press conference and effectively remove all 7-OH products (and other synthetics) from your store shelves.



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	<p>Please responsibly regulate kratom to protect the citizens of LA. Thank you!</p>
Meghan Rose	<p>I'm a Los Angeles County resident writing to share my perspective on the proposed kratom ban.</p> <p>I support regulation, not prohibition.</p> <p>Recent concerns about kratom products—particularly those that are synthetically altered, highly concentrated, or poorly labeled—are valid and should be addressed. Clear labeling, age restrictions, lab testing, and enforcement against unsafe products are necessary.</p> <p>However, a blanket ban would fail to distinguish between unsafe products and responsibly produced, lab-tested kratom. Used occasionally and with intention, natural kratom products have helped me reduce reliance on medications with heavier side effects and avoid alcohol during periods of pain or nervous system stress. I know many others who share similar experiences.</p> <p>Prohibition does not eliminate use—it removes safeguards and drives people toward unregulated alternatives. Regulation allows for transparency, consumer protection, and accountability.</p> <p>I urge the County to consider a regulatory approach that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• age limits (21+)• mandatory third-party lab testing• clear alkaloid labeling• restrictions or bans on synthetic or enhanced kratom products <p>This approach protects public health while preserving access for responsible adult use.</p> <p>Thank you for considering public input.</p>
Michelle L Flowers	<p>We have helped a tremendous amount of people with the Kratom leaf. Kratom is not the same as 7-OH, as I do not sell 7-OH, but I do sell Kratom, and stand behind it. My Kratom products are no different than any of the other products I sell, they are premium and are third party lab tested. Kratom has helped my customers with a wide variety of things, including; pain, headaches, anxiety, and some with opioid withdrawal symptoms. The amount of people that Kratom helps is astounding, to take that away would be a tragedy.</p>
Mike Lee	<p>Following my battle with cancer, I developed an opioid addiction that turned into a lifelong struggle. After many years of addiction, I finally found Kratom. It let me build my life back, I got married, fixed my credit, built a great career, about to start a family. Kratom is a great tool for many people like me. I fell into 7-oh last year for a 2 month period, not really knowing what it was. I was lucky to stop but 7OH is highly addictive and can be destructive. It is in no</p>



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		way the same thing as Kratom.
	Misty Brown	<p>Dear Board of Supervisors,</p> <p>There is a critical scientific difference between whole-leaf kratom and the products being sold today as "7-hydroxymitragynine," or 7-OH.</p> <p>Whole-leaf kratom is simply the dried leaf of <i>Mitragyna speciosa</i>. Its primary alkaloid is mitragynine. When someone consumes kratom, the human body naturally converts only a very small amount—typically well under one percent—into 7-OH through normal liver metabolism. This process is slow and self-limiting.</p> <p>By contrast, the 7-OH products now appearing on the market contain laboratory-isolated or chemically converted 7-hydroxymitragynine in amounts far beyond what the human body could ever produce from kratom leaf. At those levels, 7-OH behaves much more like a conventional opioid and carries much higher risk.</p> <p>When these high-potency 7-OH products are lumped with natural kratom, it leads to misleading risk assessments and poor public policy. Regulating or restricting 7-OH does not require banning whole-leaf kratom—and that distinction matters, because kratom saved my life.</p> <p>From 2008 to 2019, I lived trapped in FDA-approved pain pills, benzodiazepines, and muscle relaxers prescribed for my degenerative disc disease. Over 11 years, chronic pain management turned into full-blown addiction. What began as dependency slowly became a cycle of misuse, desperation, and shame.</p> <p>In April of 2019, I was dismissed from pain management after failing a required pill count. I was short on my medication and couldn't find what I needed. Cut off from prescriptions, I turned to the streets, and in that desperation, I slipped into cocaine use while trying to find another doctor.</p> <p>By June of 2019, I was in withdrawal and at rock bottom when I watched a documentary called <i>A Leaf of Faith</i>. That moment changed everything. The next day, I walked into a shop, showed my ID, and bought whole-leaf kratom...not synthetic 7-OH.</p> <p>Kratom quieted the relentless cravings. The voice that kept saying, "one more pill, one more snort, one more escape," finally went silent. For the first time in over a decade, I felt stable. Kratom gave me the breathing room to heal and allowed me to rebuild my life.</p> <p>I have not returned to pain management in over six and a half years. Today, I am a thriving mother, a first-time grandmother, and a contributing member of society. I am no longer a burden to my children. I am an example of recovery.</p> <p>I will always be grateful that I had access to safe, lab-tested, whole-leaf</p>



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	<p>kratom. And that is why I speak out to protect others who are still fighting for their lives.</p> <p>Misty Brown</p> <p>Kratom Advocate & Activist, est. 2019</p>
Monica L Tinajero	<p>Kratom saved my life. It's natural leaf. I was addicted to opiates 15+ years until I found Kratom.</p> <p>7-OH is synthetic and makes addiction worse.</p>
Nick Carpentieri	<p>Dear Board,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly oppose the proposal to ban kratom in Los Angeles county. There are millions of kratom users in the United States that benefit from the use of this plant.</p> <p>A study done in 2022 (cited below) found that state-level kratom bans (Vermont, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Indiana) were associated with a significant additional rise in opioid overdose mortality.</p> <p>In conclusion, banning kratom in Los Angeles county would be a detriment to public health in California. I write this email to persuade the board to trust the science and studies, and learn from the mistakes of other jurisdictions that have enacted bans on kratom.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Blair, Lyndsey, "Investigating the relationships between socioeconomic status, Kratom legislation, and the COVID-19 pandemic on opioid overdose mortality in the United States." (2022). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 3829. ?doi.org/10.18297/etd/3829</p>
Noelle Henninger	
Rachel Villatoro	
Reanna C Harrison	<p>Pure leaf Kratom saves lives. I have lupus and ms. Pure leaf has changed my life for the better. I do not consider 7oh Kratom at all. It is not the same as Pure leaf in any way, shape or form. I do NOT take opioids anymore at all for my chronic pain. Kratom does NOT get you high or make you feel weird at all. As a matter of fact I haven't felt myself in over a decade until I chose Kratom over pain meds! It has given millions our lives back. Especially those of us with chronic pain disorders and diseases. All we want is to be ourselves pain free. And Kratom has done this. Please keep Kratom Pure leaf attainable for us. Since the pain management has turned into a problem, Kratom is the safest and more effective alternative. I will answer any questions at anytime. Thank you</p>



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S D	<p>Please consider banning only synthetic kratom. While those synthetic versions are dangerous, natural kratom leaf is just like any other herbal product that people should be allowed to purchase and consume if they are over 21. Beverages containing natural kratom are especially great for social events because the people who choose to drink them aren't drinking alcohol. There are many other drinks with nootropics and natural products in them that are specifically for socializing and relaxing and natural kratom drinks are no different.</p>
Sharie Molton	<p>I support the use of kratom. It is lifesaving for many. It has helped so many that have struggled with addiction and pain management. It is all natural and a clean substance that anyone can use.</p>
Stephen McIntosh	<p>I wish to address the board on this matter and discuss how important it is that botanical kratom not be restricted for adult consumers in LA County as a permanently disabled, retired, chronic pain patient who does not get adequate pain management from medical cannabis or from my medical provider.</p> <p>I believe a regulation similar to Orange County or Riverside County ordinances on this matter are most appropriate, reasonable, align with AB 1088/SB 578, and align with KCPA laws in the states that regulate kratom.</p> <p>This kind of registration will do the most to balance the needs of the community, restrict higher risk of harm 7-OH products from the marketplace, and limit access to those 21+.</p>
Tony Rodini	<p>My name is Tony Rodini and I am an LA resident. I've been using Kratom for almost ten years, and I am a strong advocate for the plant. I have severe obsessive-compulsive disorder, as well as anxiety and a tic disorder. Kratom significantly helps reduce my anxiety, which in turn helps me manage the tics, ruminations, and other difficult symptoms caused by my conditions. Science will support that the natural plant in its unadulterated state poses no threat to the public health and safety. I believe that products containing 7-OH are in fact the problem and should be recognized as such.</p> <p>I believe that regulation, not prohibition is the answer. Please consider all the people that Kratom, in its natural form, helps in so many different ways—and try to put yourself in our shoes.</p> <p>thank you</p>
Wendy Schroeder	<p>There are no deaths directly related to Kratom. Please stop spreading lies. This plant is a lifesaver for many and needs to be left alone. Thank you.</p>
Zachary Mori	<p>Kratom has helped improve my life and health , I have literally got in the best shape ive ever been in „in my entire life , while using kratom,„literally I am in better shape at 40 yrs old.then most all of my friends that are on trt, and im not on trt „7 oh is definitely not kratom leaf powder,,there isnt but .02 or less per gram ,ud have to take so much kratom powder to even equal 1mg , let alone 10 or 20mgs „were talking 500 grams for 10mgs , to 1000 for 20mgs ,and .02 is the highest a gram could have,,usually less 95% of the time, IT</p>



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IS.NOT FAIR TO RELATE KRAYTOM POWDER TO 7OH,,,IF U WERE WHITE , AND .02% BLACK, NOBODY WOULD EVEN RECOGNIZE U WERE BLACK ,LET ALONE BELIEVE YOU IF U SAID U WERE „SIMPLE AS THAT,, i've seen 7oh really mess people up bad ,,and make.them seem.like.there doin real.drugs,,,I have not seen that with kraytom powder,, its allmost impossible due to the amount of powder ud have to consume.were talking 1000s of grams a day „,impossible, i've taken the same amount of kraytom „,low dose.for 3 yrs and I have had zero negitive effects in fact my life has improved, my.health has improved greatly.,and my well being is at a all time high „,I take breaks.every other week or so.,,and I never go thru crazy withdrawals „,id even say its not as bad as a coffee withdrawal (caffeine) , anything can be abused.,,caffeine „,otc pain meds , allergy meds otc, alcohol, nicotine, if ur not gonna.het rid of all them.,leave.kraytom alone ,I belive.its less harmfull.than all.of those, 7 oh sure „,get rid of it ,but dont drag kraytom leaf powder into that „,I know 1000s of people who take kraytom daily.,,responsibly, and are in good health, have great jobs ,amd practice self.control and take.breaks regularly „,and I can say for.sure its not negitivly effecting them or anyone involved in.there life cuz of it „,ive been 4yrs+ clean from opiates and oiods since taking kraytom , and I havent had not one behind closed door slip up.,,kraytom literally saved my life.and made.quiting a 13yr habit do able.,,I dont abuse „,I take.breaks every other 2 weeks., just to.practice self.control., get rid of the 7oh extracts „,but leave the kraytom leaf powder alone,its helping 1000s of people deal with depression, anxiety, pain „, im a healthy way ,dont ban kraytom powder.and force us all to have to run to opiates or oiods for realife.,that would be awful ,please keep.our kraytom.leaf legal.,, go.ahead and get rid of 7oh that stuff is awful and arguably Just as bad as.real.drugs.,,but „, most people.that rake.kraytom.,take 10.grams or less daily„, , some that have.taken it for.10yrs or.more might.tale 15 - 20 grams a.day not at.once.,,thats.not a reliving amount of 7oh, ud have to take 500 for 5 mgs of 7oh „,1000 grams for 10mgs of.7oh „,i can tell ya „,nobody is taking anything close to.that , thats over 3 to 4 months worth.of.power for.any normal leaf user.,,maybe even 5 or 6 months worth if powder for some (like me) my point being „,7oh is not kraytom.,,thats like.saying moonshine is like beer „, one oz of beer is not equal to one.oz.of.moonshine., kraytom literally has literally .02 or.less per gram.,most.bags are sold.in 100grams or 250 grams , that means a total.of 2mgs of 7oh in the entire bag that will last most kraytom leaf users.2 or 3 months ,the 7 oh at that point is irrelevant, leave the kraytom leaf alone., its not the problem.,the concentrated , extracted 7oh tablets are the problem.,,not the leaf „,the leaf has been around for decades and nobody had cared about it „,all the sudden extracts come out and everyone is saying kraytoms.bad „,its not kraytom.it is the 7oh purely „,thats the problem not regular.kraytom leaf „,please.leave our leaf alone, its been helping me.and 10000s of people daily , live healthy productive „,most importantly„,happy lives.,thank you.for reading this „,i.hope the right people hear this and understand what im saying is true , have a great day and take my words into consideration please and thank you

Item Total	150	
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Grand Total			150	
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As of: 2/2/2026 9:00:04 PM

Do not ban Kratom

New brew is a healthy alternative beverage that should not be banned. The drink has no proven side effects and enables people who choose to avoid coffee, a healthy alternative.

We should allow people to choose what they consume and not cow tow to authoritarian impulses. Let the free determine whether this product is of benefit to those who decide to consume it.

Thank you.

Lora Romney – Patient Testimony

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.

Just this week I came across this post. It perfectly summarizes the terrifying position that pain patients are being put in by having their access to pain medication taken away. Notice the last two sentences. It says it all.



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
(801)557-1144
loraromney@gmail.com



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



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



AMERICAN KRATOM ASSOCIATION

POLICY BRIEF

A Legislator's Guide to Natural Leaf Kratom (mitragynine) Versus 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH)

Background

Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. For centuries, its leaves have been used by laborers in fields in Southeast Asia for an energy boost and for minor pain relief. In the United States, kratom is widely used as (1) a replacement for a cup of coffee for an energy boost and increased focus; (2) a natural alternative to manage common aches and pain, anxiety, and; (3) to support individuals suffering from acute and chronic pain, and for those in that category who are trapped in opioid addictions, kratom has been found to help those addicted to opioids to wean off those highly addictive and potentially deadly opioids.

7-OH is not present in the natural kratom plant. It is a metabolite that occurs during the drying of the leaves after they are harvested from the kratom trees. That oxidization during drying produces only trace amounts of 7-OH during this process and at those levels pose no safety risk to consumers.

The Difference Between Natural Leaf Kratom and Chemically Manipulated 7-OH Products

Natural leaf kratom products, whether pure leaf or properly manufactured extracts using naturally limiting food grade solvents, have as their main component the kratom plant alkaloid known as mitragynine.

7-OH products are deliberately manipulated to chemically flip the content of a product to be majority 7-OH and that product content is described by FDA Commissioner Makary as follows: "7-OH is an opioid that can be more potent than morphine. We need regulation and public education to prevent another wave of the opioid epidemic".¹ There are only trace amounts of mitragynine, if any, in these 7-OH products.

Chemically Manipulated 7-OH Has Been Recommended to be Classified as a Schedule 1 Compound by HHS and the FDA

While natural leaf products have a well-documented safety profile for consumer use with only trace amounts of 7-OH, chemically manipulated 7-OH products have been determined by HHS and FDA to pose an imminent threat to the safety of consumers. On July 29, 2025, the scheduling recommendation was transmitted to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-steps-restrict-7-oh-opioid-products-threatening-american-consumers>

Is Natural Leaf Kratom Safe?

Yes -- when manufactured responsibly with accurate labeling and age restrictions on purchasing. Key evidence includes:

- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has funded over \$100 million in research that confirms kratom has a lower risk profile than opioids and has potential as a harm-reduction tool.
- The FDA has acknowledged that kratom-related deaths are rare and typically involve adulterated or polydrug use.
- Former HHS Assistant Secretary Brett Giroir, in 2018, rejected the FDA's request to ban natural leaf kratom as a Schedule I substance, citing "embarrassingly poor evidence" and "failure to consider overall public health."
- Millions of Americans use kratom daily with no serious adverse effects, and 18 states have passed Kratom Consumer Protection Acts to ensure responsible regulations assure product safety through product formulation standards, proper labeling and age restrictions for purchase.

Conclusion

Kratom is a natural botanical that, when regulated for purity and serving sizes, is a safe and effective product used by millions of Americans. The American Kratom Association advocates for regulations on kratom products and 18 states have enacted Kratom Consumer Protection Act legislation.

Chemically manipulated 7-OH products did not meet the federal requirements for market entry in 2023 when they were first introduced. The emerging threat to consumers of chemically manipulated 7-OH compounds compels states to act to remove these products from the marketplace today.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE SALE & DISTRIBUTION OF
7HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7OH) PRODUCTS AND REGULATING KRATOM
PRODUCTS**

Section 1. Findings and Purpose

The governing body finds and declares that:

1. Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) contains naturally occurring alkaloids, including mitragynine and trace, nonpharmacologic levels of 7hydroxymitragynine (7OH).
2. Concentrated, isolated, or synthetic forms of 7OH have been shown to bind to opioid receptors and can produce euphoric, sedative, or moodaltering effects at higher doses, creating a potential for abuse, dependence, and public health harm.
3. The FDA's 2025 assessment characterizes 7OH as a potent opioid receptor agonist with abuse potential and risk of severe dependence, stating:
"Critically, 7OH produces respiratory depression, physical dependence, and withdrawal symptoms characteristic of classical opioids, such as morphine, fentanyl, oxycodone, and hydrocodone."
4. Scientific research and public health advisories have raised concerns about kratom products containing elevated, isolated, or synthetic concentrations of 7OH, which may increase the potential for abuse and harm to the public.
5. The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect public health and safety by restricting access to kratom and 7OH products containing more than **2% 7OH in the alkaloid fraction or more than 1 mg per serving.**

Section 2. Adoption of Article

A new Article is hereby adopted, entitled:

"Prohibition on Sale or Distribution of 7Hydroxymitragynine (7OH) Products and Regulation of Kratom Products."

The Article shall read as follows:

**ARTICLE X. PROHIBITION ON SALE OR DISTRIBUTION OF
7HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7OH) PRODUCTS AND REGULATION OF KRATOM**

PRODUCTS

Sec. X1. Authority and Purpose

This Article is enacted pursuant to the jurisdiction's general police powers to protect public health, safety, and welfare. Its purpose is to regulate access to kratom and 7OH products containing more than **2% 7OH of total alkaloids or more than 1 mg per serving.**

Sec. X2. Definitions

For purposes of this Article:

(a) "7OH product"

A product containing 7hydroxymitragynine in concentrations exceeding natural levels found in *Mitragyna speciosa* leaf, including:

- more than **2% of total alkaloids**, or
- more than **1 mg per serving**.

Products containing only trace, naturally occurring levels of 7OH are not included.

(b) "Attractive to children"

Packaging, labeling, or imagery reasonably expected to appeal to children, including but not limited to:

- cartoons, toys, robots
- real or fictional humans
- fictional animals or creatures
- decorative fruits or vegetables
- imagery or phrases commonly used in marketing to children
- imitation of candy, cereal, snack, or sweet packaging
- use of "candy," "candies," or variants
- brand names or close imitations of brands marketed to children
- packaging easily confused with commercially available children's food products
- any other packaging determined, based on all relevant facts, to be attractive to

children

(c) "Kratom leaf"

The leaf of the kratom plant (*Mitragyna speciosa*), in any form.

(d) "Kratom leaf extract"

Means a preparation obtained from *Mitragyna speciosa* leaf that retains the natural leaf alkaloid profile, including nonpharmacologic levels of 7hydroxymitragynine, and has not been enriched, isolated, concentrated, fortified, or otherwise altered to increase the proportion of any individual alkaloid.

(e) "Natural leaf alkaloid level"

The alkaloid profile naturally occurring in unprocessed kratom leaf, including:

- no more than **2% 7OH** of total alkaloids, and
- no more than **1 mg per serving**.

(f) "Kratom product"

A product consisting of kratom leaf, kratom leaf extract, or both.

(g) "Total kratom alkaloids"

The sum of mitragynine, speciociliatine, speciogynine, paynantheine, and 7hydroxymitragynine.

Sec. X3. Prohibited Conduct

(a) Age Restriction.

No person shall sell, offer for sale, or distribute a kratom product to any individual under **21 years of age**.

(b) 7OH Concentration Limit.

No person shall sell, offer for sale, or distribute a kratom or 7OH product containing:

- more than **2% 7OH** of total alkaloids, or
- more than **1 mg per serving** of 7OH.

(c) Products Attractive to Children.

No person shall sell, offer for sale, or distribute a kratom product that is attractive to children.

(d) Age Verification.

Any person selling kratom products shall conduct age verification sufficient to ensure compliance with subsection (a).

Sec. X4. Packaging Requirements

Kratom products offered for retail sale shall be packaged in **childresistant packaging** that remains childresistant for the life of the product.

(Additional packaging standards may be inserted here if required.)

Sec. X5. Violations and Penalties

(Insert penalty structure appropriate for the adopting jurisdiction, such as administrative fines, civil penalties, or business license actions.)

Section 3. Severability

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is held invalid, the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

Hello,

My name is Michael Andrew Bochey, and I am a firefighter-paramedic with the City of Los Angeles. I believe it would be helpful for decision-makers to hear directly from an LA City firefighter with firsthand experience responding to overdoses and managing occupational injuries.

I am writing because from both a public-health and emergency-medicine perspective, it is obvious that prohibition has not worked, and repeating it with 7-OH or kratom will predictably worsen the problems the County is trying to address.

Every shift, firefighters and paramedics respond to overdoses. Over the years, we have watched the drug supply become progressively more dangerous despite prohibition. The progression is clear and measurable: morphine and heroin gave way to fentanyl, fentanyl to carfentanil, then xylazine entered the picture, and most recently in Los Angeles we are now seeing nitazenes detected in counterfeit pain pills sold as oxycodone. Compounds such as isotonitazepene are reported to be many times more potent than fentanyl. 7-OH provides an alternative that we are NOT seeing overdoses of. Without 7-OH available, users will inevitably move towards illicit-market drugs with unknown potency and purity, effectively playing Russian roulette with their lives. This escalation is the predictable outcome of prohibition. When access is restricted, the market shifts toward stronger, cheaper, and easier-to-smuggle drugs, which dramatically increases overdose risk and mortality. This is exactly what firefighters and paramedics are responding to on the street.

To put it as blatantly as possible: a 7-OH ban will result in avoidable deaths.

I also want to speak directly to how 7-OH and kratom can be relevant to firefighters and other physically demanding professions. Firefighting routinely results in back, joint, and musculoskeletal injuries. Many firefighters are first exposed to opioids through legitimate medical treatment for work-related injuries, not through recreational use. While people often cite this pathway when discussing opioid addiction, what is rarely mentioned is that the vast majority of people who are prescribed opioids do not become addicted. Addiction is not an automatic or inevitable outcome of exposure.

As articulated by researchers and writers such as Johann Hari and LA Native, Dr. Carl Hart, addiction is deeply tied to trauma, isolation, lack of purpose, and disconnection, in addition to any physiological dependence that may occur. The pharmacological mechanism alone does not cause addiction, and policy that focuses only on banning substances ignores the underlying drivers entirely.

For some firefighters, kratom-derived products function as harm-reduction tools, helping manage pain while avoiding or reducing reliance on full opioid agonists. This matters from an overdose-prevention standpoint. Full opioid agonists are strongly associated with respiratory depression, especially when combined with alcohol or benzodiazepines, combinations we frequently see involved in fatal overdoses.

From a pharmacological standpoint, 7-OH does not recruit beta-arrestin in the same way as traditional opioids, a pathway that has been associated with respiratory depression. This means that it has a different risk profile, one that should be addressed through science-based regulation, consumer education, and more research, not blanket bans that push people toward unregulated and far more dangerous alternatives.

As a firefighter-paramedic, I strongly support education around addiction potential, appropriate dosing, and the dangers of combining substances, particularly depressants like alcohol and benzodiazepines. Education saves lives. Prohibition does not. We already know this from decades of evidence and from what we are seeing unfold in real time on our streets.

Criminalizing or banning 7-OH or kratom will not eliminate demand for pain relief or self-medication. It will simply push people into illicit markets, where potency, contamination, and dosing are unknown, increasing the likelihood of overdose and death.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge Los Angeles County to:

- Reject efforts to ban or criminalize 7-OH or kratom
- Pursue evidence-based regulation focused on safety, testing, labeling, and age limits
- Emphasize education, treatment access, and harm reduction over enforcement
- Avoid repeating prohibition policies that have already worsened the overdose crisis

Thank you for considering the perspective of a working firefighter-paramedic who sees the real-world consequences of these policy decisions every day.

Sincerely,
Michael Andrew Bochey
Firefighter-Paramedic, City of Los Angeles



MEDICAL EXAMINER AND FORENSIC SERVICES

Decedent:

Matthew J. Eller

Case: **W21-1383**

Sex: Male

Race: White

Age: 22 years

Date of Birth: 03/08/1999
Date Pronounced Dead: 11/10/2021
Time Pronounced Dead: 2000 hours
Date of Exam: 11/11/2021
Time of Exam: 0730 hours
County: Muskegon
Pathologist: Joseph Prahlow, M.D.
Autopsy Procedure: Complete
Identification: Identification Tags
Persons in Attendance: Jenna Jones, Assistant
Matt Bombich, Photographer
Ben Root, Medical Student
Josh McGarry, Medical Student
Sung Jik Cha, Medical Student

Postmortem Examination Report

Cause of Death:

TOXIC EFFECTS OF MITRAGYNINE

Manner of Death:

ACCIDENT



Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine

Department of Pathology

300 Portage Street • Kalamazoo, MI • 49007

269.337.6173

med.wmich.edu

CIRCUMSTANCES:

History that the decedent stood up after playing a game of cards and then collapsed and demonstrated seizure-like activity. All resuscitative efforts failed. He had a history of kratom use.

RECEIPT OF REMAINS:

The body is received in the facility on 11/11/2021 at 0710 hours. The body is received in a secured body bag with an identification tag bearing the decedent's name and a sealing device marked with the number "2335758."

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The body is identified by tags on the body bag and the right ankle. Photographs and x-rays are taken. The body is received wearing a pair of athletic shorts, a pair of boxer briefs, and a pair of socks. There is no jewelry.

The body is that of a well-developed, well-nourished, white male, whose appearance is compatible with the stated age of 22-years. His body is 73-inches long and weighs 138-pounds. The body is cold, rigor is fully developed, and the posterior lividity is partially fixed. The scalp hair is up to approximately 5-inches in length, brown, and wavy. There is emesis within the hair. The irides are hazel, and there are no petechiae of the bulbar or palpebral surfaces of the conjunctivae. There is no beard or moustache. The ears, nose, and lips are unremarkable except that the earlobes are pierced. The teeth are natural and in good condition. The neck is unremarkable. The chest is symmetrical. The abdomen is flat and unremarkable. The external genitalia, anus, and perineum are unremarkable. The penis is circumcised, and the testicles are descended into the scrotum. The extremities are well developed, symmetrical, and unremarkable. The back is unremarkable. The skin is unremarkable.

IDENTIFYING MARKS AND SCARS:

There is a tattoo of the name "Hannah" on the right triceps region.

EVIDENCE OF THERAPY:

- Oral laryngeal mask airway
- Multiple EKG pads
- Defibrillator pads
- Intravenous line, left antecubital fossa
- Bandage, left third finger

EVIDENCE OF INJURY:

There is a less than 1/8-inch superficial incised wound of the tip of the left third finger. There is a 3/16-inch in greatest dimension linear abrasion of the proximal knuckle of the left second finger. There is an approximately 1/4-inch in greatest dimension vertical linear laceration of the lower lip. There is a less than 1/8-inch crusted excoriation of the right shin. There is a less than 1-inch in greatest dimension subtle, left frontal subscalpular hemorrhage, but no other head trauma.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION:**BODY ORGAN WEIGHTS:**

Brain	1480 grams	Heart	340 grams
Right Lung	600 grams	Left Lung	500 grams
Liver	1840 grams	Spleen	230 grams
Right Kidney	150 grams	Left Kidney	170 grams

BODY CAVITIES:

The thoracic and abdominal organs are in their normal anatomic positions. The body cavities contain no adhesions or abnormal collections of fluid.

HEAD AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM:

The scalp, subscalpular area, and skull are unremarkable except for the subtle left frontal subscalpular hemorrhage. The dura and dural sinuses are unremarkable. There are no epidural, subdural, or subarachnoid hemorrhages. The leptomeninges are thin and delicate. The cerebral hemispheres are symmetrical with an unremarkable gyral pattern; however, there is diffuse swelling. The cranial nerves and blood vessels are unremarkable. The brain is retained for Lieber neuropathological examination. The spinal cord is not examined. The pituitary gland is unremarkable.

LIEBER EXAM (from report):

The dura mater included with the specimen includes a portion of right and left calvarial dura with the superior sagittal sinus, and the falx cerebri, and dura including and adjacent to the torcula. The dura and dural sinuses are unremarkable, with no sinus thromboses, neomembranes, or mass lesions. The cerebral and cerebellar hemispheres are symmetrical with no evidence of softening or atrophy. The cortical sulci are somewhat effaced from cerebral swelling. The leptomeninges are smooth and transparent. There is no evidence of transtentorial, subfalcine, central diencephalic, or external herniation. The cerebellar tonsils are prominent, consistent with diffuse brain swelling. The blood vessels of the Circle of Willis show no atherosclerosis with no aneurysms, vascular anomalies, or malformations. The cranial nerves are present and unremarkable. Serial coronal sections of the cerebral hemispheres demonstrate well demarcated gray and white matter structures. The cortical ribbon is of normal thickness and the centrum semiovale is intact throughout, with no focal lesions. The medial temporal lobe structures including the hippocampus are bilaterally symmetric and effaced somewhat from brain swelling. There is no significant atrophy or evidence of mesial temporal sclerosis. The deep gray matter structures are anatomically intact without focal lesions. The ventricles are symmetrical with no evidence of hydrocephalus. Serial axial sections of the brainstem reveal pigmentation of the substantia nigra and locus ceruleus appropriate for age, unremarkable brainstem nuclei and white matter tracts, and no focal lesions. Midsagittal section of the cerebellar vermis and serial parasagittal sections of the cerebellar hemispheres are unremarkable. The dentate nucleus of the cerebellum is present and unremarkable.

NECK:

The soft tissues and prevertebral fascia of the neck are unremarkable. The hyoid bone and larynx are intact. The tongue is unremarkable.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM:

The intimal surface of the aorta is free of atherosclerosis. The aorta, its major branches, and the great veins are normally distributed. The pericardium, epicardium, and endocardium are smooth, glistening, and unremarkable. There are no thrombi in the atria or ventricles. The foramen ovale is closed. The coronary arterial system is right predominant and is free of atherosclerosis; however, the proximal left anterior descending coronary artery demonstrates “tunneling”. The atrial and ventricular septa are intact. The cardiac valves are unremarkable. There is slight biventricular dilatation (right greater than left). The myocardium is dark red-brown and firm, with no focal abnormalities.

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM:

The upper airway is unobstructed, but does contain small amounts of gastric contents. The laryngeal mucosa is smooth and unremarkable, without petechiae. The pleural surfaces are smooth and shiny. The pulmonary arteries contain no emboli. The major bronchi are unremarkable except for the presence of some gastric contents. Sectioning of the lungs discloses a dark red-blue, mottled, somewhat congested parenchyma.

HEPATOBILIARY SYSTEM:

The liver is covered by a smooth, glistening capsule. The parenchyma is dark red-brown and moderately congested. The gallbladder contains no calculi. The extrahepatic biliary ducts are unremarkable.

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM:

The esophageal mucosa is gray, smooth, and unremarkable. The stomach contains 250 mL of tan semi-fluid substance. The gastric mucosa has normal rugal folds and there are no ulcers. The small and large intestines are unremarkable. The appendix is present. The pancreas is unremarkable externally and on sectioning.

GENITOURINARY SYSTEM:

The subcapsular surfaces of the kidneys are smooth and slightly lobulated. The cortices are of normal thickness. The calyces, pelves, and ureters are unremarkable. The urinary bladder contains 75 mL of clear, yellow urine. The mucosa is gray, smooth, and unremarkable. The prostate gland is unremarkable. The testicles are unremarkable.

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM:

The thyroid and adrenal glands are unremarkable externally and on sectioning.

RETICULOENDOTHELIAL SYSTEM:

The spleen is covered by a smooth, blue-gray, intact capsule. The parenchyma is dark red. The lymph nodes are unremarkable. The thymus is unremarkable.

MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM:

The clavicles, ribs, sternum, pelvis, and vertebral column have no fractures. The diaphragm is intact.

MICROSCOPIC EXAMINATION:

LUNGS – Hyperexpanded alveolar spaces; bronchial mucosal hemorrhage; focal chronic bronchial inflammation.

THYROID – Variably-sized follicles; dark colloid.

ADRENAL, LIVER, THYMUS, HEART, KIDNEY, PANCREAS – Unremarkable.

BRAIN (per Lieber report) – Unremarkable adult brain.

SLIDE KEY:

A: Adrenal, liver, thymus

B: Lungs

C: Heart, kidney

D: Pancreas, thyroid

(BRAIN slides as per Lieber report)

VITREOUS ELECTROLYTES:

Sodium	118	mEq/L
Potassium	7.5	mEq/L
Chloride	124	mEq/L
Urea nitrogen	17	mg/dL
Creatinine	1.05	mg/dL
Glucose	<35	mg/dL

TOXICOLOGY:

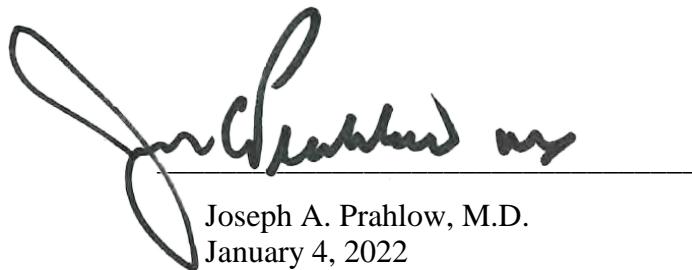
FEMORAL BLOOD -	Mitragynine -	2100 ng/mL
	Caffeine -	0.85 mcg/mL
	Cotinine -	Positive

FINAL FINDINGS:

- I. Toxic effects of mitragynine
- II. Not found: Anatomic explanation for death

CONCLUSION:

Based upon the autopsy findings and the history as available to me, it is my opinion that Matthew Eller, a 22-year-old white male, died as a result of the toxic effects of mitragynine.



Joseph A. Prahlow, M.D.
January 4, 2022

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
500 West Temple Street
Room 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairwoman Hahn and Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors,

My name is Dr. Heidi Sykora, a Doctor of Nursing Practice with decades of clinical and leadership experience. I volunteer as the Chief Scientific Officer for the International Plant and Herbal Alliance, and I have no financial ties to kratom. My goal is simply to support informed, practical public-health decisions. I work nationally with counties and states to help them distinguish natural botanical kratom products from the manufactured substances that are driving recent public-health concerns.

Natural kratom leaf is a botanical product. It is the dried leaf of the *Mitragyna speciosa* tree, processed by traditional methods such as drying and grinding. It contains dozens of naturally occurring alkaloids. Many consumers choose to consume the natural powder mixed with water, extracted as a tea or packaged as capsules or extracts made with FDA-approved food-grade solvents.

Surveys indicate that kratom's reported uses by consumers are for relief of pain, anxiety, PTSD, management of opioid withdrawal symptoms and maintenance of sobriety. Importantly, kratom does not have the respiratory depressant effect like opioids.

With more than 1,700 fentanyl-involved deaths annually in Los Angeles County, taking away an option that many individuals rely on to avoid substances that cause respiratory arrest leading to death, creates foreseeable and avoidable risk. When a policy predictably increases the likelihood of fatal exposure, it becomes not only poor public-health practice but a liability for the County.

7-hydroxymitragynine (7OH) is not a botanical product. It cannot be extracted from the kratom leaf in usable quantities because it is present in only trace amounts in the natural plant. 7OH is instead manufactured through a chemical process. Once a substance requires chemical conversion to obtain usable amounts, it is no longer considered botanical or plant-derived and it definitely is **not** kratom.

Banning natural kratom leaf will not address the issue that brought this matter before you. It would remove a botanical product that thousands of Californians already use, while leaving the County without a clear regulatory framework for manufactured substances that have recently been found in death cases. Worse, a ban would push consumers toward unregulated markets, where synthetic products are more prevalent and where the County has no oversight.

A targeted approach is both safer and more effective. You can regulate or prohibit semisynthetic and synthetic products without banning natural kratom leaf products. Many states have already adopted this distinction with the Kratom Consumer Protection Act, allowing botanical kratom while explicitly prohibiting chemically converted derivatives. You can adopt a local regulation based on that framework. This is in line with the FDA's recent recommendation to schedule 7OH. This approach protects public health without the potential destabilization and harm to the lives of responsible adult consumers of a natural plant.

In closing, I urge the Board to focus regulation where the risk truly lies: on manufactured 7-OH products, not on the botanical kratom leaf that is legally distinct and not implicated in the harms seen in Los Angeles County. A ban on natural kratom would not prevent future overdoses, but it might lead to more by loss of a product that is used by many as a harm reduction tool.

Heidi Sykora DNP
Chief Scientific Officer
International Plant and Herbal Alliance
505 East South Temple Suite 200
Salt Lake City, Utah
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262-573-7848



Outdated and Misleading Information

Much of the information being circulated to local policymakers by health departments is based on outdated FDA claims that have been contradicted by newer scientific evidence.

Former HHS Official's Rebuke

Dr. Brett Giroir, former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Health, withdrew the FDA's proposed kratom scheduling request in 2018, citing the agency's reliance on "embarrassing poor evidence and data and a failure to consider the overall public health."

Current Federal Leadership Distinguishes Kratom from Synthetics

Recent statements from FDA Commissioner Dr. Makary and HHS Secretary Kennedy indicate that federal concerns apply specifically to synthetic and semi-synthetic kratom-derived compounds—not to natural kratom leaf or properly extracted products.

Public Health Risk of Bans

Local bans push consumers into unsafe illegal markets where adulterated, contaminated, or synthetic "fake kratom" products are sold without oversight. This undermines public safety rather than protecting it. Bans produce two unintended outcomes: some adults are pushed toward illegal markets, while others will not enter those markets at all and are left without any safe, regulated option.

Scientific Evidence of Safety

Peer-reviewed research and more than \$100 million in NIDA-funded studies support a favorable safety profile for pure leaf kratom and properly extracted products when used responsibly. FDA's own Phase 1 clinical study found that "kratom appears well tolerated at all dose levels" tested.

Distinction from Synthetics

The real risk comes from synthetic and semi-synthetic 7-hydroxymitragynine products, which are pharmacologically distinct from kratom. Bans that fail to draw this distinction penalize consumers who rely on safe, natural kratom products.

Consumer Demand & Harm Reduction

Millions of Americans use kratom as a safer alternative to opioids, alcohol, and other substances. Removing access to safe kratom eliminates a valuable harm-reduction tool and can drive people back toward more dangerous drugs.

The FDA Has Not Approved Kratom for Any Medical Use

The FDA approves drug compounds, not dietary or botanical substances, for medical use. Health and vitamin shops nationwide sell thousands of dietary and botanical supplements that have no FDA-approved medical use.

Economic Harm to Local Businesses

Bans deprive responsible small businesses of legitimate revenue, push commerce to neighboring jurisdictions or online sellers, and punish compliant retailers who follow safety standards.

Unnecessary Criminalization

Prohibition criminalizes otherwise law-abiding citizens for personal health choices and diverts law enforcement resources away from serious threats such as fentanyl.

State-Level Solutions Exist

Many states are adopting the Kratom Consumer Protection Act (KCPA), which ensures products are manufactured safely, labeled transparently, and restricted from minors. Local bans undermine this balanced regulatory approach.

Local Kratom Enforcement & Youth-Protection Measures

Regulatory Area	Practical Local Actions
1. Age-Restriction Enforcement	Routine compliance checks for underage sales ID verification for every purchase Escalating penalties for repeat violations
2. Retailer Licensing / Registration	Simple registry of kratom retailers Retailers acknowledge local rules upon registration Registry used for updates, inspections, accountability
3. Product Placement & Access Controls	Products kept behind the counter or employee-controlled areas Option to limit sales to adult-only establishments No placement near candy, snacks, or youth-oriented items
4. Packaging & Marketing Restrictions	No packaging attractive to minors Clear labeling, batch numbers, manufacturer info No unsubstantiated medical claims
5. Product Safety Standards	Only products meeting safety standards: — Verified lab testing — Limits on 7-OH content — No adulterants or synthetics Inspectors may remove non-compliant products
6. Targeted Compliance Checks	Integrate kratom checks into alcohol/tobacco operations Periodic, unannounced inspections Prioritize retailers with violations or complaints
7. Proportionate Penalties	Civil penalties for most violations Escalating consequences: warning → fine → suspension Criminal penalties only for intentional or dangerous conduct
8. Public Reporting & Transparency	Publish enforcement results periodically Encourage consumer reporting Transparency deters bad actors and supports compliant retailers
Recommended Product Limits	No product should contain more than 1 mg of 7-OH per serving No more than 3 mg of 7-OH per package <i>These limits reflect emerging toxicology data and are consistent with evolving state-level regulatory models.</i>
Protect minors	Age 21 restriction Behind-the-counter placement Prohibit child-attractive packaging Restrict sales near schools/playgrounds
Maintain adult access	Allow sales in adult-only establishments (e.g., vape shops) Maintain access to compliant, tested products

February 2, 2026

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Meeting (2-3-26)
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 381B
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Agenda Item 12 - Preventing Deaths Related to Kratom and 7-OH

Dear Chair Hahn and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

My name is Dr. Michele Ross. I am an addiction scientist and court-qualified expert witness on kratom, and I respectfully submit this public comment regarding Agenda Item 12, *Preventing Deaths Related to Kratom and 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH)*.

I support the Board's goal of preventing overdose deaths and reducing harm in Los Angeles County. However, I strongly urge the Board **not** to pursue any ordinance or prohibition that would ban kratom or 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). The scientific and public-health evidence indicates that such an approach would be more likely to **increase**, rather than prevent, serious harm.

Kratom products have been used safely and responsibly by Californians for more than two decades. Today, an estimated **2.4 million California residents use kratom**, and **at least 118,000 use products containing 7-OH**. Any county-level ban, emergency action, or de facto prohibition would therefore affect a large, identifiable population, with predictable consequences for public health systems, workforce participation, and overdose risk.

7-hydroxymitragynine is **not a novel synthetic drug**. It is a naturally occurring alkaloid found in the kratom plant and is also produced in the human body whenever kratom is consumed. Approximately **24% of mitragynine is metabolized into 7-OH**, meaning that ordinary kratom use results in measurable 7-OH exposure. For this reason, 7-OH cannot be meaningfully separated from kratom consumption through prohibition without criminalizing or disrupting lawful, established use.

Current scientific evidence does not support classifying kratom or 7-OH as uniquely dangerous substances warranting bans. Both mitragynine and 7-OH are atypical, partial mu-opioid receptor agonists with ceiling effects that limit respiratory depression and overdose risk when taken alone. Observational human data indicate that kratom-related risk is driven primarily by **dose and frequency of use**, not by whether a product is leaf-based, extracted, or alkaloid-standardized.

Importantly, **removing lawful access** to kratom or 7-OH carries foreseeable and serious human consequences. In my **unpublished October 2025 research survey of 1,521 adults who use 7-OH products**, **17% reported that they would consider suicide if 7-OH were banned**. In

the same survey, **approximately 8% of respondents identified as U.S. military veterans**, underscoring that this population includes individuals with elevated baseline risk for chronic pain, disability, and suicide. These findings are consistent with broader evidence that abrupt loss of effective pain management or withdrawal-stabilization tools can destabilize vulnerable adults and increase suicide risk.

In addition, many respondents indicated they would seek illicit opioids or unregulated sources if legal access were removed—outcomes that are well known to increase overdose deaths, emergency department utilization, and long-term public costs. These are precisely the harms the County seeks to prevent.

The Board's concern about "harmful substitutions" is valid—but the solution is **not** banning kratom or 7-OH. Evidence from jurisdictions that have enacted bans shows that prohibition **accelerates the emergence of novel synthetic alkaloids** designed to evade the law. Compounds such as **MGM-15**, which are **not found in the kratom plant and lack meaningful safety data**, have proliferated specifically in states, counties, and cities where kratom or 7-OH has been banned. These substances pose far greater unknown risk than regulated, plant-derived products.

If Los Angeles County wishes to prevent deaths and reduce harm, the evidence supports a **regulatory approach**, not prohibition. Effective measures include:

- 21+ age-gating for all kratom products
- Child-resistant packaging and bans on youth-oriented marketing
- Mandatory third-party testing and publicly available certificates of analysis
- Clear labeling and dosing transparency
- Targeted bans on **novel synthetic alkaloids not naturally present in kratom**, including **MGM-15**
- Investment in research, surveillance, and public education rather than enforcement-driven suppression

Kratom and its naturally occurring alkaloids are not the cause of the opioid crisis. For many adults, they function as **harm-reduction tools**, pain-management aids, and stabilizing alternatives to far more dangerous substances. An ordinance banning kratom or 7-OH would undermine these benefits and risk worsening the very outcomes the Board seeks to prevent.

I respectfully urge the Board to direct County agencies toward **science-based regulation, targeted action against truly novel synthetics, and continued research**, rather than pursuing bans that history shows will backfire.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to submit this comment for the public record.

Respectfully,

Dr. Michele Ross PhD, MBA
Addiction Scientist
Author of *Kratom is Medicine*
Chief Scientific Advisor, 7-HOPE Alliance
442-237-8624
michele@7hopealliance.org

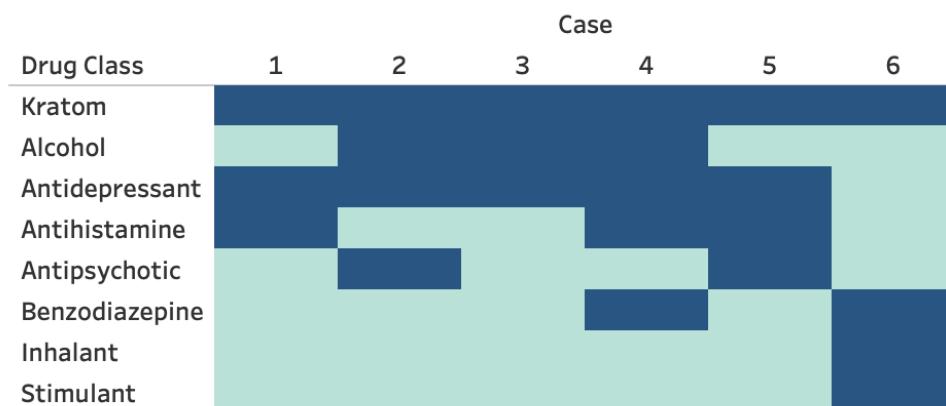
Below I have attached a statement I authored on the “7-OH” Overdose deaths, which after review of the autopsy and toxicology reports, are clearly not 7-OH deaths.

Public Statement from 7-HOPE Alliance on Recent Los Angeles 7-OH Overdose Reports

7-HOPE Alliance extends our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones affected by the recent overdose deaths reported in Los Angeles County. Any loss of life is tragic, and preventing drug-related deaths is a shared public health priority.

At the same time, it is important that public health communications remain **scientifically accurate, transparent, and evidence-based**, particularly when they may influence consumer behavior, medical decision-making, and policy actions.

Based on the publicly released Medical Examiner records and toxicology reports, the six Los Angeles deaths referenced by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health appear to be **polysubstance overdose cases in which 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) was detected**, alongside alcohol and/or multiple other drugs known to significantly increase overdose risk, including benzodiazepines, antidepressants, antihistamines, antipsychotics, stimulants, and illicit substances.



To date, **no quantitative blood levels of 7-hydroxymitragynine have been publicly released**, nor has evidence been made available demonstrating the use of a specific 7-OH product in any of these cases. Without concentration data, product attribution, or timing of ingestion, it is **not scientifically possible to determine whether detected 7-OH originated from natural metabolism of kratom (mitragynine) or from isolated 7-OH products**, or to establish causal primacy in these deaths.

Detection alone does not establish cause of death. In forensic toxicology, the presence of a substance in postmortem testing must be interpreted in the context of dose, interactions, and known pharmacology. This is particularly critical in cases involving multiple central nervous system depressants, where synergistic effects are well-documented and frequently responsible for fatal outcomes.

Importantly, this caution is not novel or unique to 7-hydroxymitragynine. **The forensic and medical literature has repeatedly documented cases in which kratom or mitragynine was initially cited as a cause of death, only to later be recognized as a coincidental finding in complex polysubstance overdoses.** Peer-reviewed analyses have shown that many reported “kratom deaths” involved multiple other substances with well-established lethality and that attribution to kratom was often based on presence rather than demonstrated toxic dose or causal mechanism.

These historical misattributions indicate the importance of rigorous standards when interpreting postmortem toxicology findings and communicating risk to the public. Without quantitative data and careful differential analysis, there is a significant risk of overstating the role of a single compound while obscuring the true drivers of overdose risk.

7-HOPE Alliance has formally requested access to the underlying toxicology data and product evidence related to these cases for independent evaluation of safety risks, including high-risk products or manufacturers. To date, that information has not been released.

We strongly support harm-reduction principles, including:

- Avoiding taking with sedatives including alcohol, benzodiazepines, opioids, antihistamines, and sleeping pills
- Using caution with any psychoactive substances
- Seeking medical guidance when managing pain, substance use, or mental health conditions
- Expanding access to naloxone and overdose prevention education

Public health warnings are most effective when they are **transparent about uncertainty** and grounded in verifiable evidence. Labeling complicated deaths from multiple substances as

caused by just one substance, without proper evidence, can mislead the public and prevent education on overdose risks.

7-HOPE Alliance remains committed to collaborating with public health officials, researchers, clinicians, and regulators to improve consumer safety, ensure accurate risk communication, and prevent future harm. We continue to call for the release of the relevant data so that these deaths can be evaluated with the rigor and clarity they deserve.

Dear Honorable Members,

My name is Karen Davenport. I am a wife, a grandmother, and a nurse practitioner in Chattanooga TN. I'm also a grieving mother who once gave birth to three children. But on March 18, 2024, my world was shattered when my son, Matthew—one of my twins—died suddenly in his sleep. The cause of death was a lethal interaction of doctor-prescribed medications Buspar, Duloxetine, Benadryl and an unregulated substance called Kratom. Until that tragic day, I had never heard of Kratom, even though I work in the medical field.

Matthew was a sweet, kind, and thoughtful young man who struggled with depression and anxiety for much of his life. He worked hard to overcome alcohol addiction and found support in rehab and a sober-living home, where he had been thriving. He was living proof that a person can regain their footing with proper care, perseverance, and love. Tragically, that stability was cut short when Kratom—purchased as casually as breath mints at a nearby convenience store—played a fatal role in his death.

I cannot adequately describe the heartbreak of losing a child. My husband and I watched helplessly as doctors tried to revive our son, only to hear the hollow words, "We're so sorry; we tried everything." In that surreal, upside-down moment, I remember screaming his name and clutching his lifeless body, still unable to believe that the boy we had just hugged the night before at dinner was gone.

Since March 18, 2024, I've struggled through birthdays, holidays, and everyday life without Matthew. My family has been robbed of our joy; my grandson will never again see his uncle light up a room with his quiet humor. And Matthew's twin sister—who once shared every milestone with him—will forever feel his absence like a missing piece of her own soul.

Matthew's toxicology report confirmed that the interaction between his prescription medications for anxiety and depression and Kratom was lethal. Kratom is marketed as a benign supplement for stress and pain, binding to opioid receptors, yet it remains unregulated, readily available in gas stations and convenience stores. It is made from the leaves of a tree in Southeastern Asia.

It has been linked to numerous deaths in the United States and around the world. And now Rehab centers are starting to admit patients struggling to get off this substance. I have poured countless hours into researching Myrtigynine and believe—wholeheartedly—that no family should have to endure the torment that has gripped mine.

In my ongoing mission to warn others, I speak to youth groups, sharing Matthew's story to illustrate the real and devastating risks of Kratom. Now, I am reaching out to you provide legislative support, because no human trials exist to establish safety, efficacy, dosing information, side effects, drug interactions, nor any medical benefit. As Dr. Scott Gottlieb with FDA explained in February 2016, the agency considers it an opioid and a chemical concern. Newborn babies whose mothers have been exposed to Kratom are now being treated with the same Neonatal Abstinence protocols, of those of mothers of fentanyl, oxycontin, and heroin.

Numerous states Alabama, Arkansas, Vermont, Indiana, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin have ban it, also many countries including the two where it is produced Indonesia and Thailand.

I urge you to consider supporting legislation to schedule and or ban Kratom in the state of Ohio. With your guidance, we can bring an end to these preventable tragedies and spare other parents,

spouses, and children the unrelenting devastation of losing a loved one in such a senseless way.

I humbly ask for your leadership. Our families and communities deserve protection from harmful substances like Kratom. Thank you for your time, compassion, and willingness to address this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Karen Davenport, APN, ACNP-BC
8935 Grey Mountain Dr
Ooltewah, TN 37363

423-421-0848
kdacnp@gmail.com

Public Comment – Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

My name is Wendy Chamberlain. I am the mother of Joseph S. Lumbrazo, my only child, who died on August 30, 2020, from mitragynine toxicity. Joseph was 38 years old, a hardworking business owner, a devoted father of three boys, and a loving son. He was not addicted to illegal drugs. He believed kratom was a safe, legal supplement sold openly in stores and online. That belief cost him his life.

Joseph used kratom for energy. Like so many families I have since met, we had no warning, no label explaining the risk, and no regulation protecting consumers. After his death, I learned that kratom products can contain potent opioid-like compounds, including 7-hydroxymitragynine, and that deaths like my son's are often dismissed, minimized, or mischaracterized.

No parent should have to bury their child and then fight to have the truth acknowledged. I founded Kratom Danger Awareness (KDA) so that Joseph's death would not be ignored and so other families would be warned before it is too late. Every name represents a loved one. Every delay means another family may receive the call I did.

I urge Los Angeles County to act with courage and compassion. Please listen to families, medical examiners, and public health experts—not industry talking points. Protect your communities. Joseph should still be here. Others still can be.

In memory of Joseph S. Lumbrazo
Wendy Chamberlain
Founder, Kratom Danger Awareness, Inc.
www.kratomdangerawareness.org

What is 7-OH? A Guide to the Kratom Alkaloid Making Headlines

If you've been following the conversation around kratom, you may have heard about 7-hydroxymitragynine, or simply 7-OH. While the name sounds like something out of a chemistry textbook, 7-OH is just one of the natural compounds found in the kratom plant. Some people believe it holds promise for supporting wellness, and it is gaining attention as a unique component of kratom products.

But what exactly is 7-OH, and why is it getting so much attention? Whether you're a consumer looking for natural options or a policymaker exploring regulation, this guide will break it down in the simplest way possible.

From Kratom Leaves to 7-OH

Kratom is a tropical tree that grows in Southeast Asia, where its leaves have been used for generations. The leaves contain a variety of natural compounds called alkaloids, which interact with the body in different ways.

The most common alkaloid in kratom is mitragynine. When mitragynine is exposed to oxygen—either through natural processes like sunlight and heat or inside the human body—it changes slightly and turns into 7-OH. Think of it like a banana ripening: as time passes and conditions change, the banana becomes sweeter. In a similar way, mitragynine transforms into 7-OH under the right conditions.

Although only a tiny amount of 7-OH naturally forms in kratom leaves, scientists have found ways to extract and refine it. This helps ensure that products containing 7-OH have a consistent and measurable amount, rather than relying on the unpredictable levels found in raw kratom leaves.

The History of 7-OH: From Discovery to Debate

For centuries, kratom has been used in Southeast Asia, but it wasn't until modern science took a closer look that 7-OH was identified as one of its key compounds. As researchers began studying kratom's effects, they realized that the body naturally converts some of the mitragynine into 7-OH, making it a significant part of how kratom works.

Over time, scientists learned how to isolate 7-OH to better understand its properties. This led to discussions about whether it should be studied further for potential benefits, as well as concerns over how it should be regulated. Some people worried about its potency, while others saw it as a safer alternative to traditional pain management options.

As interest in 7-OH grew, 7-HOPE was founded to advocate for scientific research, safe access, and responsible regulation. Our group brings together researchers, industry leaders, and consumers to ensure that accurate information about 7-OH is available and that policies are based on facts, not fear.

What is 7-OH?

7-OH is a naturally occurring alkaloid found in kratom. It forms when mitragynine, the main compound in kratom, undergoes a change through oxidation. This process happens in nature when kratom leaves are exposed to sunlight and air, and it also occurs inside the body after kratom is consumed.

Because 7-OH is found in extremely small amounts in fresh kratom leaves, it is often extracted and refined to ensure consistent levels in products. This controlled process allows manufacturers to create tablets, gummies, and liquid shots that contain specific amounts of 7-OH, making it easier for consumers to understand what they are taking.

Unlike synthetic drugs, 7-OH is derived directly from the kratom plant. Some consider it “semi-synthetic” because it undergoes a simple conversion process similar to what naturally happens in the body. However, it remains a plant-based compound, rather than a fully lab-created chemical.

How Are People Taking 7-OH?

As awareness of 7-OH grows, people are finding new ways to incorporate it into their daily routines. Unlike traditional kratom, which is often brewed as tea or taken as powdered leaves, 7-OH is available in tablets, gummies, and drinks. These forms make it easier to take precise amounts and avoid the bitter taste that some find unpleasant in kratom leaf products.

Some people take 7-OH in the morning to help them start the day with a sense of focus and energy. Others use it in the evening as part of a relaxation routine. The most common ways people are using 7-OH include:

Tablets and capsules: These provide a consistent dose and are convenient for people

who want an easy-to-carry option.

Gummies: A more palatable option for those who don't like swallowing pills, gummies make 7-OH feel like part of a wellness routine.

Liquid shots and drinks: Some brands are incorporating 7-OH into beverages, allowing for fast absorption and a smoother experience.

Who is Using 7-OH and Why?

People who choose 7-OH often come from different backgrounds but have one thing in common: They're looking for alternatives. Some are seeking relief from everyday aches, while others are turning to it as part of a broader effort to move away from more harmful substances.

For example, some individuals have shared how 7-OH helped them regain control of their wellness routine without relying on pharmaceuticals. Others say it supports relaxation, stress relief, and general well-being. While these experiences are promising, the scientific community is still working to gather enough data to understand the full picture.

What's Next for 7-OH?

As 7-OH gains attention, the conversation is just beginning. Some states are looking to ban it due to misunderstandings, while others are considering fair regulations that ensure safety without unnecessary restrictions.

Groups like 7-HOPE Alliance and HART (Holistic Alternative Recovery Trust) are working to make sure science—not fear—shapes policy decisions. The goal is to allow continued research, protect consumers, and create smart regulations that encourage responsible use.

For consumers, the most important thing is education. Learning about 7-OH, choosing tested and regulated products, and following recommended guidelines will help ensure that this natural compound remains available for those who find it helpful.

For lawmakers, the challenge is balancing safety with access. Rushing to ban 7-OH without solid research could push people toward more dangerous substances, while well-thought-out regulations could ensure safety and consumer protection.

If you've heard 7-hydroxymitragynine—also known as 7-OH—referred to as “gas station heroin,”

you're not alone. It's a phrase designed to provoke fear, not inform. And it couldn't be further from the truth. The science behind 7-OH tells a very different story—one of a naturally occurring, plant-derived compound that may offer a safer alternative for managing pain and supporting recovery.

A Natural Compound—Not a Synthetic One

7-OH is not a synthetic drug created in a lab. It's a naturally occurring alkaloid found in very small amounts in the kratom plant (*Mitragyna speciosa*). More importantly, it's also produced *inside the human body* when the primary kratom compound—mitragynine—is metabolized by the liver. Studies show that roughly **21% to 31%** of consumed mitragynine is converted into 7-OH, depending on the dose.

So, if you've taken kratom, you've already experienced 7-OH. The only difference with 7-OH-based products is that they replicate this metabolic conversion externally using natural oxidation—removing variability, increasing consistency, and reducing liver burden.

Why It's Not Comparable to Heroin

Let's break down the facts. Heroin is a **full opioid agonist**, meaning it completely activates opioid receptors in the brain—causing euphoria, sedation, and dangerously suppressed breathing. That's what makes it so addictive and so deadly.

7-OH is fundamentally different:

It acts as a **partial agonist** at the mu-opioid receptor, meaning it only partially activates the receptor and *cannot* reach the same level of effect as full opioids like heroin or fentanyl.

It exhibits a “**ceiling effect**,” meaning taking more doesn't increase the effect beyond a certain point. This greatly reduces the risk of overdose.

It **does not meaningfully activate the -arrestin2 pathway**, which is the mechanism responsible for life-threatening respiratory depression.

There is no established lethal dose (LD50) for 7-OH, and to date, **no confirmed deaths** have been linked to 7-OH use alone.

So Where Did the Fear Come From?

The term “gas station heroin” was never born from toxicology data or peer-reviewed research—it came from industry competitors with something to lose. Some kratom lobbying groups have used this term to discredit 7-OH while protecting their own market position. These same groups often promote high-dose mitragynine products, which ironically require the body to metabolize even more 7-OH internally—placing greater stress on the liver in the process.

Rather than working toward shared standards for safety and regulation, some stakeholders have chosen to spread disinformation to eliminate competition. The science tells us this isn’t about public health—it’s about market control.

What the Science (and Real People) Say

Thousands of people across the U.S. are now turning to 7-OH as a life-changing alternative to traditional opioids, alcohol, and prescription medications. In testimonials from patients, veterans, working professionals, and those in recovery, we hear the same themes again and again:

- Pain management** for conditions like arthritis, migraines, sciatica, and post-surgical pain
- Support for mental health**, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and BPD
- A tool for recovery**, helping people taper off heroin, fentanyl, Suboxone, and alcohol
- Improved quality of life**, with less sedation, better focus, and fewer side effects

Unlike prescription opioids, 7-OH users report that they can function in daily life without feeling “numbed out” or sedated. Many say they’ve been able to get off stronger substances and stay clean thanks to 7-OH.

Let’s Lead With Facts, Not Fear

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has already rejected efforts to ban kratom and its components, citing the public health risks of cutting off access. Scientific advisory groups, former federal drug policy officials, and harm reduction advocates are urging policymakers to pursue **regulation—not prohibition**.

The bottom line: 7-OH is not heroin. It’s not synthetic. It’s not some untested street drug. It’s a naturally derived compound with a distinct, safer mechanism of action—already helping thousands of people manage pain and addiction without the risks associated with traditional opioids.

America is in the middle of a drug overdose epidemic that has claimed more than 100,000 lives

annually in recent years. Synthetic opioids—particularly fentanyl—are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 45. Against this backdrop, lawmakers in several states are considering banning a naturally occurring compound known as 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), a metabolite of the kratom plant that many individuals are using as a safer alternative to prescription opioids, alcohol, and other addictive substances.

Banning 7-OH may seem like a precautionary move—but the reality is that such a ban could backfire, eliminating a key harm reduction tool and driving people back toward far more dangerous substances. The science, the lived experiences, and the regulatory context all point to one conclusion: prohibiting 7-OH would create a public health crisis, not solve one.

A Safer, Natural Alternative That's Already Helping Thousands

7-OH is not a synthetic lab drug. It's a naturally occurring alkaloid found in trace amounts in the kratom plant and is also produced inside the human body when kratom's primary compound, mitragynine, is metabolized by the liver. In fact, studies show that 21–31% of mitragynine is converted into 7-OH inside the body, depending on the dose.

What makes 7-OH unique—and important—is its partial activation of the brain's mu-opioid receptor. Unlike heroin or fentanyl, which fully activate these receptors and can suppress breathing to the point of overdose, 7-OH is a partial agonist with a ceiling effect, meaning there's a natural limit to its action. This reduces the risk of respiratory depression and overdose.

According to published research and ongoing safety studies:

- There is no known LD50 (lethal dose) for 7-OH
- It does not significantly activate the beta-arrestin2 pathway, which is a known driver of opioid overdose
- It has shown promise for pain management, mood stabilization, and reduced alcohol intake in preclinical studies

The Risk of Taking Away a Harm Reduction Option

Across the country, thousands of people are using 7-OH products to manage chronic pain, mental health conditions, and recovery from addiction. In testimonials submitted to organizations like the 7-HOPE Alliance and HART, users describe using 7-OH to taper off heroin, fentanyl, and Suboxone; manage PTSD, BPD, and depression; and find energy and focus without prescription drugs.

Many say it is **the only thing that has worked for them**, especially in states where access to medical cannabis or opioid alternatives is limited. Others have turned to 7-OH after conventional recovery tools failed. To take this option away—without providing a safer or more effective alternative—would be devastating.

This isn't just theoretical. In its decision *not* to schedule kratom or its components, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services explicitly cited the "**significant risk of immediate adverse public health consequences for potentially millions of users**" if access were eliminated.

Regulation Works. Prohibition Doesn't.

Some lawmakers are considering banning 7-OH under the belief that it is a synthetic opioid or that it hasn't been studied enough. But these assumptions don't hold up under scrutiny.

Most importantly, 7-OH is not synthetic. It is either metabolized naturally in the body or derived from kratom using oxidation—a simple process comparable to how other natural supplements (like Delta-8 THC or stabilized vitamin C) are made. Its production is fully consistent with dietary supplement practices.

The idea of a 1% or 2% cap on 7-OH is also flawed. These caps are based on arbitrary percentages rather than actual milligram limits per serving. As experts have noted, a 2% cap can actually encourage more dangerous product formulations by forcing manufacturers to combine high levels of mitragynine to "balance" the 7-OH content—ironically increasing the liver burden and potential toxicity.

Instead of bans or caps, science-based regulation is the answer. Industry groups like HART are actively pursuing federal and state legislation to ensure all 7-OH products are:

- GMP-compliant and tested for contaminants
- Clearly labeled with serving sizes and warnings
- Kept out of the hands of minors
- Manufactured to standardized, safe limits

Misinformation Has Consequences

The campaign to ban 7-OH has been riddled with misinformation. Some opponents have labeled 7-OH as "gas station heroin"—a phrase rooted in marketing, not science. Others have pointed to kratom-related death reports without acknowledging that more than 95% of these

cases involved multiple substances or adulterants.

Even studies often cited by critics don't claim that 7-OH is unsafe when used responsibly. Instead, they emphasize the need for more research—which is exactly what the 7-HOPE Alliance and HART are doing. Pre-clinical studies on liver toxicity, pharmacokinetics, enzyme metabolism, and tolerability are already underway, with results expected this year and into 2026.

A Ban Doesn't Eliminate Demand—It Eliminates Safety

We've seen what happens when substances are banned without addressing underlying demand. It pushes people to the illicit market, where products are unregulated, mislabeled, and often dangerous. A ban on 7-OH would do the same. It would open the door for black market products, unsafe mixtures, and desperate consumers turning back to fentanyl, alcohol, or unregulated kratom extracts.

In contrast, a legal, regulated market keeps people safe, encourages transparency, and supports public health goals. And for many individuals—especially those in recovery—access to 7-OH is the difference between progress and relapse.

Let Science Lead, Not Stigma

The facts are clear: banning 7-OH would do more harm than good. It would strip away a promising harm reduction tool at a time when America desperately needs more of them. It would punish responsible users while doing nothing to solve the underlying crisis of addiction, chronic pain, or inadequate access to alternative therapies.

There's been a lot of noise around whether 7-OH is synthetic or natural. Let's cut through the confusion: 7-OH is not synthetic. It's a naturally occurring compound found in the leaves of the kratom plant. But like many things, the reality isn't just black and white, it's important to understand how 7-OH is made and why the "synthetic" label is misleading.

What is 7-OH?

7-OH is a compound that comes straight from kratom leaves. When people use raw kratom, they're mainly consuming mitragynine, a natural alkaloid that, when processed

by your liver, transforms into 7-OH. Think of it like baking a cake: mitragynine is the raw batter, and your liver is the oven. When it passes through your body, it transforms into 7-OHM, delivering many of kratom's pain-relieving and mood-enhancing benefits.

Although 7-OH is present in kratom leaves in small amounts, less than 2% of the plant's content, it packs a punch in effectiveness. And here's the kicker: It's naturally derived, not whipped up in some lab.

Why the Confusion?

The confusion mostly comes from how 7-OH is concentrated for use. In its raw form, there's just a tiny bit of it in kratom leaves. To make it usable for products, manufacturers extract and concentrate it. This is where terms like "semi-synthetic" sometimes pop up. But that's not the whole story.

Imagine this: You wouldn't call orange juice synthetic just because it's been concentrated from fresh oranges, right? The same logic applies here. When manufacturers concentrate 7-OH, they are not creating something artificial; they are simply purifying what already exists in nature. It's just like how vitamin C is extracted from citrus fruits for supplements, nobody calls vitamin C synthetic just because it's in a capsule.

What About Fully Synthetic 7-OH?

Yes, it is technically possible to synthesize 7-OH entirely in a lab. This method involves a 12-step chemical process. But here's the catch: it's time-consuming, incredibly expensive, and inefficient. The yield from this process is only about 11%. Meanwhile, most responsible manufacturers just oxidize mitragynine, the main alkaloid in kratom, to create 7-OH. This is a natural process where oxygen is applied and it is cooled, basically nudging it to finish what nature started. The result? The exact same 7-OH you'd find in kratom leaves, just more of it.

Saying lab-made 7-OH is the standard is like claiming people prefer to build a tree from scratch instead of just planting a seed and letting it grow. Technically possible? Yes. Practical? Absolutely not.

Why the "Synthetic" Label is Misleading

Calling 7-OH synthetic is not just misleading, it's factually incorrect in almost every case. The vast majority of 7-OH on the market is created through natural oxidation of mitragynine, mimicking what happens in your liver when you consume raw kratom. This process doesn't involve artificial chemicals, nor does it alter the molecular structure of 7-OH. It's simply a matter of concentration and refinement, just like the way caffeine is extracted from coffee beans or omega-3 from fish oil.

It's like saying a smoothie isn't real fruit just because you blended it. Blending it doesn't change what it is, it's still fruit.

The Bottom Line

7-OH is not synthetic. It's a naturally occurring compound that is concentrated through natural processes. While it is possible to create a fully synthetic version, it is costly, inefficient, and almost never the method used by reputable manufacturers. So, when you hear claims that 7-OH is synthetic, understand that this is misinformation designed to confuse and mislead.

To put it simply: 7-OH is as natural as the kratom leaves it comes from. Just like orange juice is still orange juice, even when it's concentrated, 7-OH is still 7-OH, pure and natural.

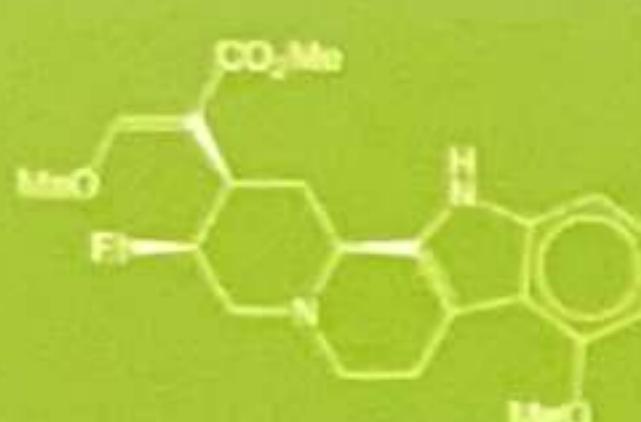
7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE

BASIC SCIENCE

WHAT IS 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE AKA 7-OH?

7-OH is a natural compound found in the raw leaves of *Mitragyna speciosa* trees (commonly known as kratom).

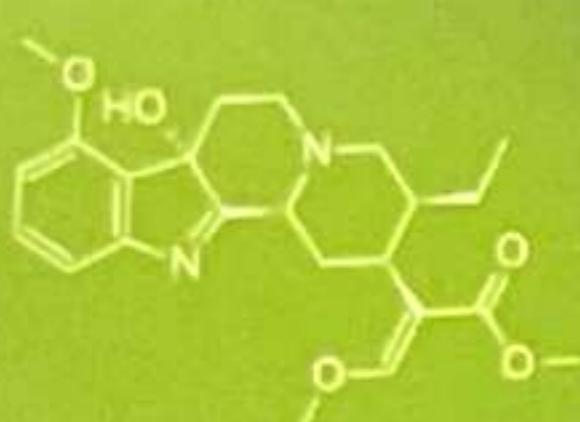
MITRAGYNINE



Most Abundant Alkaloid in Kratom Plant

VS.

7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE



<2.0% in Kratom Plant

HOW 7-OH IS MADE?

- The body naturally converts ~20% of mitragynine into 7-OH during metabolism in the liver and gut.
- Manufacturers of 7-OH products essentially replicate that process outside the body.
- It's similar to how Vitamin C tablets are made - there aren't actually 20 oranges stuffed into a pill.

Mitragynine naturally metabolizes into 7-OH once inside the human body.

IS 7-OH SAFE?



No Lethal Dose



Naturally Derived



Therapeutic Potential



Less Side Effects

WHY ARE PEOPLE TAKING 7-OH?

- Pain Management
- Substance Abuse Recovery
- Anxiety & Depression
- Energy and Focus

INDUSTRY ECONOMICS

GLOBAL KRATOM MARKET IN 2024

\$7bn

PROJECTED GROWTH

17%
in coming years

US KRATOM EST. SALES 2024

\$4bn+

US 7-OH EST. SALES 2024

\$2bn+

DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

72% M

AVG. AGE

41

TOP MARKETS

FL, CA, TX

1 bn

doses sold

1m

consumers

87%

used kratom prior

REPORTED THERAPEUTIC USES



74%
Chronic Pain



45%
Depression



23%
Relief from Opioid Addiction

PUBLISHED SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS

- There is no LD50 (lethal overdose) level of 7-OH when ingested orally.

*Lateral Flow Assessment and Unanticipated Toxicity of Kratom (Smith et al., 2018)

- 7-OH has a lower risk of side effects over traditional opioids.

*7-Hydroxymitragynine Is an Active Metabolite of Mitragynine and a Key Mediator of Its Analgesic Effects (Kruegel et al., 2019)

*Chemical Composition and Biological Effects of Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*): In Vitro Studies With Implications For Efficacy and Safety (Dodd et al., 2020)

- 7-OH demonstrated significant pain-relieving (analgesic) effects.

*7-Hydroxymitragynine Is an Active Metabolite of Mitragynine and a Key Mediator of Its Analgesic Effects (Kruegel et al., 2019)

- 7-OH has a lower potential for abuse compared to traditional opioids.

*Evaluation of the Rewarding Effects of Mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine in Rats (Behnood-Rod, 2020)

*G Protein-biased Kratom Alkaloids and Synthetic Carfentanil-amide Opioids as Potential Treatments for Alcohol Use Disorder (Gutridge et al., 2020)

- 7-OH reduced alcohol intake in mice, suggesting potential therapeutic applications for alcohol use disorder.

*G Protein-biased Kratom Alkaloids and Synthetic Carfentanil-amide Opioids as Potential Treatments for Alcohol Use Disorder (Gutridge et al., 2020)

7-OH STUDIES IN PROGRESS

- Single dose MTD study in rat and mice
 - Studies maximum tolerated dose of 7-OH
- CYP Inhibition Studies
 - Test for drug-interactions caused by slowing down liver enzymes
- CYP Induction Studies
 - Test for drug-interactions caused by speeding up liver enzymes
- Metabolic Stability Study
 - Tests how fast the liver breaks the substance down

- Pharmacokinetic study rat and mice
 - Tracks absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion (ADME)
- Pharmacokinetic study humans
- Safety & Tolerability Study in Humans
 - Observing for adverse events
 - Measuring organ toxicity
 - Monitoring sedative effects such as respiratory depression or drowsiness

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

Lilly P., 21, Portland, OR

"I use 7-hydroxymitragynine for pain management due to endometriosis... It's truly helped me so much and honestly changed my life as dramatic as it sounds."

James C., 28, Avon, CO

"I was a IV heroin user for several years getting off I tried everything from suboxone to methadone which was just as hard as the heroin to stop. Since I found 7-OH I always have it to go to instead of the hard drugs or prescription opioids and has helped me to have a viable option to turn to"

Michael T., 44, Toledo, OH

"I have used 7-OH products for years, I have severe back pain and it helps me every day. Instead of relying on prescription painkillers which are 100% addictive, I use these instead."

Jim N., 50, Surprise, AZ

"7-OH is a life saver. I used to take Percocet, hydrocodone, and whatever else to relieve the pain I have in my hips..I've had both replaced and Kratom capsules worked for a while but 7-OH is by far a superior product. Gives you energy and relieves the pain.. This product has literally been a life saver."



January 29th, 2026

Honorable Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Subject: Kratom Regulation

Dear Chair and Honorable Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Global Kratom Coalition (GKC), we write to respectfully urge the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to pursue a targeted approach to kratom products that is consistent with recent federal and state action, rather than a blanket ban that would unintentionally encompass lawful products.

We appreciate the Board's leadership in addressing emerging public-health concerns related to concentrated, synthetic 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) products and recognize the seriousness of the harms caused by these products. The tragic deaths associated with concentrated 7-OH underscore the need for decisive action. Importantly, recent federal, state and local developments demonstrate that it is possible and practical to distinguish the dangerous synthetic products from natural kratom leaf.

On July 29, 2025, [HHS, FDA, and the DEA announced coordinated federal action to schedule concentrated synthetic 7-OH](#), that is found in novel opioid products, as a Schedule I controlled substance. For context, [natural 7-OH is an oxidative byproduct](#) compound found in trace amounts in dried kratom leaf. However, synthetic 7-OH products have concentrated 7-OH at levels that are more than 100 times higher than what is found in natural kratom leaf resulting in products that are 13 times more potent than morphine.

Federal enforcement actions and warning letters have focused specifically on these synthetic products that are illegally marketed and present opioid-like risks, while explicitly not targeting natural kratom leaf. This distinction is grounded in scientific review and supported by the [FDA's own human clinical research](#) evaluating natural kratom leaf.

The State of California is moving in the same direction. Assembly Bill 1088 reflects an emerging statewide framework that would prohibit synthetic alkaloids and regulate natural kratom products with restricted youth access and labeling/packaging requirements. Several California

jurisdictions have adopted regulatory models that preserve adult access to natural kratom leaf while prohibiting or restricting derivatives.

Local governments have practical tools to differentiate between these products in real-world enforcement. [GKC maintains a publicly available database of concentrated, synthetic 7-OH products](#), documenting their names and labeling/marketing practices. This database is currently used by regulators, advocates, and enforcement officials to identify and remove synthetic 7-OH products without impacting lawful botanical kratom leaf products.

To further assist regulators, we have enclosed visual reference material to illustrate the differences between natural kratom and concentrated, synthetic 7-OH products. As you review these documents, you'll be able to see key differences in the product format, labeling language, alkaloid composition, and risk profile. This demonstrates that differentiation is straightforward and enforceable.

Finally, we have enclosed a document listing a variety of clinical studies and peer-reviewed research examining the safety, tolerability, and pharmacokinetics of natural kratom leaf. This document summarizes more than a decade of scientific evaluation and further supports the distinction between the two products.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Los Angeles County consider regulation that:

- Prohibits the manufacture, sale, and distribution of concentrated, synthetic 7-OH products through a threshold of 2% 7-hydroxymitragynine
- Establish an age-restriction on the sale of natural kratom products to 21+
- Implement clear labeling and packaging requirements to ensure its not attractive to children and maintain product compliance with the 2% threshold
- Direct enforcement resources toward products that pose a demonstrated risk

A blanket ban on all kratom products risks unintended consequences, including driving consumers toward unregulated markets or more dangerous substances, while diverting enforcement attention away from the synthetic products responsible for recent harms. A targeted, evidence-based regulatory approach allows the County to advance harm-reduction goals while remaining consistent with evolving federal and state policy.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Board, County Counsel, or relevant departments as the County evaluates regulatory options. GKC stands ready to provide additional data, regulatory models, and technical assistance to support an approach that protects public health without unintended collateral effects.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Smith
Director of Government Affairs
Global Kratom Coalition
info@globalkratomcoalition.org

Concentrated Synthetic 7-OH vs. Natural Kratom Leaf

Concentrated Synthetic 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH)

Real, Natural Kratom Leaf

AT A GLANCE COMPARISON

7-OH (high concentration)	Primary Alkaloid	Mitragynine
Lab made synthetic opioid	Origin	Natural botanical leaf
7-OH highlighted; flashy brand names	Label Clues	Whole leaf, powder, natural
Tabs, pills, gummies	Format	Leaf, powder, tea, capsules
Blue Razz, Mintopia, Baja Blast	Taste Profile	Bitter taste with high-fiber texture
High; similar to illicit opioids	Risk Profile	Low; long traditional use

HOW TO IDENTIFY

Front Label

- “7-OH,” “7-Hydroxy,” “7-Hydroxymitragynine” often listed prominently.
- Brand names like Perks, Hydroxy, Roxy, Dopium, 7Ohmz, etc.



Back Label

- 7-Hydroxymitragynine listed as the primary or most abundant alkaloid.
- Often shows high or isolated concentrations.



Formats

- Pills, tablets, gummies, candy style chews, novelty packaging.
- Formulas: “Rapid-Release,” “Extra Strength,” “Maximum Strength,” “High Potency”



What It Really Is:

- A lab made, concentrated synthetic opioid up to 13x stronger than morphine.
- Not a natural kratom product.



CONCENTRATED
SYNTHETIC
7-OH PRODUCTS
DATABASE

Front Label

- Words like “Natural,” “Leaf,” “Whole Leaf,” “Botanical,” “Powder,” “Tea,” “Capsules.”



Back Label

- Mitragynine is the most abundant alkaloid.
- 7-OH appears only in trace amounts. (Typically, well under ~2%).



Formats

- Dried crushed leaf, powder, teas, liquid suspensions, capsules containing powder.



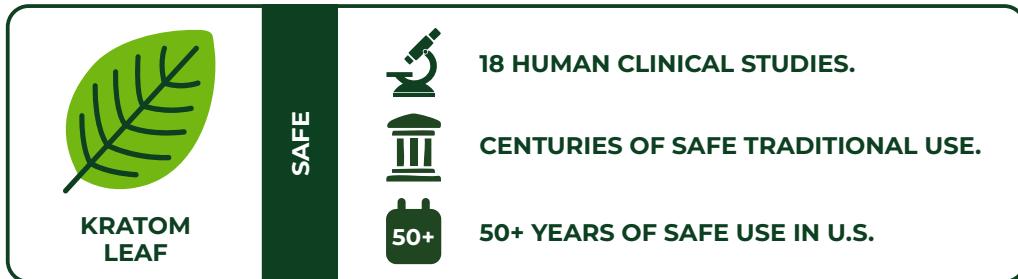
What It Really Is:

- A natural botanical used safely for centuries.
- Low potency dried leaf plant material.
- Nothing isolated or synthetically enhanced.



Not All Kratom Is Equal

Clinical Science Supporting Kratom Leaf vs Concentrated 7OH



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Municipal Kratom Legislation

Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

1. “Kratom leaf” means the leaf of the kratom plant (*Mitragyna speciosa*) in fresh or dehydrated (dried) form.
2. “Kratom extract” means a substance or compound obtained by extraction of the *Mitragyna speciosa* leaf, intended for ingestion, containing more than trace amounts of *Mitragyna speciosa* and contains other alkaloids of the kratom plant, which does not contain any controlled substances or levels of residual solvents higher than is allowed in the U.S. Pharmacopeia 467
3. “Kratom product” means a food or dietary supplement that consists of or contains kratom leaf or kratom leaf extract.
4. “Synthesized” means an alkaloid or alkaloid derivative that has been created by chemical synthesis or biosynthetic means (including but not limited to; fermentation, recombinant techniques, yeast derived, enzymatic techniques), rather than traditional food preparation techniques such as heating or extracting. Or has been further exposed to chemicals and/or processes that would confer a structural change in the alkaloids contained within the extract.
5. “Attractive to children” means products that:
 - a. Are manufactured in the shape of humans, cartoons, or animals.
 - b. Are manufactured in a form that bears any reasonable resemblance to an existing candy product that is familiar to the public as a widely distributed, branded food product, such that the product could be mistaken for the branded product, especially by children.
 - c. “Processor” means a person that manufacturers, packages, labels, or distributes kratom products or advertises, represents, or holds itself out as manufacturing, preparing, packaging, or labeling kratom products.

Restrictions.

1. No person shall sell, offer for sale, provide, or distribute kratom product to a person under twenty-one (21) years of age.
2. No person or entity shall offer for sale any kratom product that contains or is adulterated with synthesized kratom alkaloids or synthesized kratom constituents.
3. An online retailer or marketplace of kratom products shall implement an age-verification system to ensure compliance with age restrictions.
4. No person shall sell, offer for sale, provide, or distribute a kratom product that contains 7-hydroxymitragynine at a level above 2% of the alkaloid fraction of the kratom product.
5. An individual, business, or other entity shall not produce, sell, or distribute a kratom product that is attractive to children.
6. No person shall distribute kratom consumable products through displays accessible to the public without the assistance of a retailer's employee or agent other than in an establishment open only to persons 21 years of age or encased where other products accessible to persons 21 years of age are stored.

Penalties.

- a. Penalties for all violations:
 - i. A civil penalty up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for the first offense, and up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) for a second offense.
 - ii. For a third violation and each subsequent violation, the person shall be fined a minimum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), up to a maximum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000), and shall be prohibited from selling kratom products in the XXX for three (3) years.

February 2nd, 2026

To: LA Board of Supervisors

From: Glenn Johnson

RE: Save Kratom

My Journey from Addiction to Sobriety: How Kratom Helped Save My Life

I began drinking as a teenager, which quickly progressed to marijuana and then harder drugs. By my mid-twenties, I had learned to completely numb my emotions with chemicals. This pattern served me well enough through my twenties and early thirties, where heavy drug and alcohol use could still be disguised as “just partying.”

But as I grew older and pursued more serious relationships, marriage, and the possibility of starting a family, the demands of life changed. These relationships required selflessness, patience, and emotional presence—qualities that my addiction made impossible. The substances that once masked my pain now created constant friction, conflict, and destruction.

Ten years later, my life lay in ruins. I was at the end of my second marriage, my children from my first marriage had moved to another state, I was in poor physical health, unemployed, and living in a rundown trailer. I had truly hit rock bottom. Desperate, I finally sought the treatment I had long avoided.

For the next five years, I cycled in and out of rehab programs, sober living homes, and therapy. I relapsed chronically, moving between as many apartments as jobs. My intentions were genuine—I desperately wanted to get clean and rebuild my life. I achieved stretches of sobriety, including one remarkable period of 46 days. But no matter how much therapy I received or how many sober days I strung together, something was always missing. I could never find the deep, lasting peace that true long-term sobriety brings. Deep down, I wanted to *want* sobriety, but the craving and inner turmoil never fully lifted.

Then came the turning point. After what seemed to be the final collapse of my third marriage, I walked into a church service feeling broken and hopeless. During the sermon, the pastor spoke words that felt directed

straight at me. He referenced **John 5:1-18**, the story of Jesus healing the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda and commanding him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” In that moment, the verse pierced my heart—it was a call to rise from my paralysis of addiction, leave behind the old life that kept me stuck, and walk forward in freedom.

Inspired, I decided to get the verse tattooed on my arm as a permanent reminder. While waiting at the tattoo parlor, I noticed a display of kratom products. I asked the artist about it, and he explained that it could help with sleep and relaxation. At that point, I was willing to try anything to support my sobriety—especially since insomnia had always been one of my biggest triggers for relapse. I thought, “What do I have to lose? If I’m going to stay sober, I need help sleeping.”

That small decision changed everything.

Eight years later, I remain completely free from alcohol and drugs. I am happily reunited and married to the love of my life—the woman I thought I had lost forever. Together, we own our own home and run a successful business. We live comfortably in a time when that is increasingly difficult to achieve. I have rebuilt an amazing, loving relationship with my children, who moved away more than 15 years ago. My wife and I now support more than half a dozen people financially and emotionally, giving back in ways I never imagined possible.

Most importantly, I am genuinely happy and healthy—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

My wife credits this transformation to the power of God, and I wholeheartedly agree. I believe God placed kratom in my path that day at the tattoo shop. Without it, I would not have been able to manage the insomnia, anxiety, and lingering discomfort that had derailed every previous attempt at sobriety. Kratom provided the practical support I needed to finally stay on the path of recovery.

Drugs and alcohol initially helped me numb the deep childhood trauma I carried, and they worked for a time. But they only delayed the inevitable—until the demands of real responsibility and selflessness exposed their destructive nature. Left unchecked, they would have killed me.

Kratom, by contrast, gave me the stability and relief necessary to confront and heal that trauma, rather than simply masking it. It has been an essential tool in my ongoing recovery, allowing me to live the full, meaningful life that God intended.

I share my story not to promote reckless use, but to plead with the Ohio legislature: Please do not ban kratom. For people like me—those who have exhausted conventional treatments and hit rock bottom—responsible access to this plant can be the difference between life and death, despair and redemption. It was, quite literally, part of the miracle that saved mine. Thank you for considering my testimony.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to share my personal testimony in opposition to efforts to ban natural kratom leaf products.

I was first introduced to FDA-approved opioid medications by my doctor in my in 2006. What began as a legitimate prescription quickly developed into addiction, and over time I transitioned to harder, illicit substances that were extremely dangerous. I spent years struggling with addiction and ultimately lost nearly everything while battling fentanyl dependence.

I lost my husband to fentanyl. After his death, I entered a rehabilitation program and committed fully to my recovery. I have not used illicit drugs or alcohol in years, and kratom has played a critical role in my ability to remain stable, functional, and committed to long-term recovery.

Because of kratom, I was able to regain custody of my children and rebuild trust with my family. They have seen me return to the person I was before addiction. I work full time and have maintained stable employment for several years, something I was incapable of doing during active addiction. I am currently in school pursuing higher education in psychology with the goal of becoming a substance abuse counselor so I can help others who are struggling the way I once did.

Kratom became a part of my healing process and gave me the strength to rebuild my life and my family's future. It offered stability and hope when everything else had failed. It is deeply concerning to see lawmakers focus on banning a natural plant that has helped so many people recover, while far more dangerous substances remain legal and widely available. Kratom has given many people, including myself, a second chance at life when other options failed.

I strongly urge policymakers to distinguish between natural kratom leaf and highly concentrated synthetic products such as 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). Even as someone in long-term recovery, I am wary of 7-OH because of how potent and addictive it is reported to be. Synthetic and chemically manipulated products are where the real risks lie and should be the focus of enforcement. Natural kratom leaf, when regulated with age limits, testing, and labeling, provides harm-reduction benefits for many adults and does not warrant prohibition.

Please do not take away a regulated, natural alternative that has helped countless people stay alive, stable, and productive. Prohibition will not protect public health. Thoughtful regulation will.

Respectfully,

Jenifer Martin
United States

Public Comment Opposing Prohibition of Natural Kratom Leaf and Supporting Regulation

To Los Angeles County Department of Public Health,
I am submitting this public comment to strongly oppose any ban or prohibition on natural kratom leaf and to urge Los Angeles County to pursue evidence-based regulation, consumer safety standards, and education rather than criminalization.

I am a 21-year-old adult who lives with multiple serious, disabling medical conditions, including hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (hEDS), small fiber neuropathy, spinal instability, and frequent partial and full joint dislocations. These conditions cause chronic, severe pain and neurological symptoms that affect my entire body and nervous system. On a daily basis, I experience joint dislocations, burning and electric nerve pain, spinal pain from misalignments, autonomic symptoms, and physical limitations that interfere with basic functioning, mobility, sleep, and quality of life. Joint dislocations can occur during routine activities such as standing, walking, or even sleeping.

Before finding kratom leaf, my only medical options presented to me were pharmaceutical drugs such as pregabalin (Lyrica) and buprenorphine. These medications are well known to cause physical dependence, tolerance, and difficult withdrawal syndromes, and they carry long-term risks that I was not willing to accept for life. Despite being considered standard medical treatments, these drugs would have locked me into ongoing dependence with far more severe consequences than what I experience using kratom.

Natural kratom leaf has allowed me to manage my pain and symptoms without escalating to stronger pharmaceuticals or illicit substances. I do not experience tolerance escalation, compulsive use, or withdrawal symptoms when I stop. It allows me to function, remain independent, and avoid far more dangerous drug options. For me and many others, kratom is harm reduction in practice.

It is critically important to distinguish natural kratom leaf from isolated or synthetically concentrated 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) products. These are not the same substance. Natural kratom leaf contains a complex balance of alkaloids with relatively low levels of 7-OH and does not behave like a synthetic opioid. Conflating the natural plant with concentrated extracts is scientifically inaccurate and leads to misguided policy. If concerns exist about highly concentrated products, those products should be regulated separately — not used as justification to ban the natural leaf.

The available evidence shows that nearly all reported kratom-associated deaths involve multiple substances, particularly alcohol, benzodiazepines, opioids, or other central nervous system depressants. Kratom alone has not been shown to cause fatal respiratory depression in the way opioids do. This strongly supports regulation, labeling, and education — especially warnings about drug interactions — rather than prohibition.

Banning kratom will not eliminate demand. It will push people — especially those managing chronic pain, disability, or opioid dependence — toward the illicit market, where fentanyl contamination is widespread. This will increase overdoses and deaths, not prevent them. Many people use kratom specifically to avoid fentanyl, heroin, or prescription opioid escalation.

Large surveys indicate that approximately 70-75% of kratom users do not meet criteria for substance use disorder, and many maintain stable doses without problematic tolerance or withdrawal. This mirrors my own experience.

Adults are legally permitted to consume alcohol and tobacco despite their well-documented risks and lack of medical benefit. It is inconsistent and unjustifiable to ban a natural botanical with a significantly safer risk profile, particularly when responsible regulation and lab testing are available.

Reasonable regulation would include:

Mandatory third-party lab testing for contaminants and adulterants

Accurate labeling of alkaloid content and serving sizes

Age restrictions

Clear warnings against mixing with alcohol or certain medications

Separate regulatory treatment for isolated or synthetic alkaloid products

These measures protect public health without criminalizing patients or driving people toward more dangerous alternatives.

For people like me — living with frequent joint dislocations, severe nerve pain, and chronic disability — kratom is not a recreational substance. It is the difference between functioning and being bedridden.

I respectfully urge Los Angeles County to reject prohibition and instead adopt science-based regulation that prioritizes harm reduction, consumer safety, and compassion.

Sincerely,
Kaden Bradway

Scientific Opposition to Any Proposed Kratom Ban

Dear LA County Lawmakers,

I am a mother, a small business owner, and a holistic mentor to many. My passion is health freedom and I am a proud natural medicine advocate. I am bewildered and confused that there is a ban bill even being considered by any county in California, a leader in consumer protection and natural medicine.

My personal journey with kratom began after multiple emergency surgeries left me in debilitating pain; pain that was unmanageable with pharmaceuticals alone. Kratom changed the way I was able to navigate day to day life. It truly was life giving. I have a petition to protect whole leaf along with many more heartfelt testimonies. You can read their stories here: <https://www.change.org/p/preserve-kratom-legality-for-overall-wellness/feed> While stories like these and 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.

Testimony: [Video 1](#)

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 LA County 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. There have been over 450 scientific studies in regards to Kratom's safety profile. Cities and states that have pursued prohibition rather than regulation have consistently seen worse outcomes: black-market products, adulteration, loss of quality control, and increased harm. Regulation allows for age limits, labeling standards, testing requirements, and enforcement. Prohibition would remove all of those safeguards at once.

As our country 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. Protecting your current regulation, not prohibition, ensures safety, education, and access while protecting against misuse.

I urgently urge you to STOP this ban bill immediately. I encourage you to stay diligent with a research-driven regulatory framework that prioritizes consumer safety.

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

Sincerely,
Jennifer Mercier
Hopeful Consumer & Advocate

Good evening, my name is Dylan. I am a father, a New England resident and an advocate for natural health and medicine. I have family in Lompoc, Ca and spend time in the great state yearly.

Before discovering whole leaf kratom powder, I dealt with a host of debilitating health issues both physical and psychiatric. Following previous mental health diagnosis I struggled with throughout my teens and 20s, In 2018, I was diagnosed with Neuroborreliosis -- an infection that effects the brain and nervous system from the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. I suffered from a host of debilitating symptoms that upended my life for over 10 years.

Before whole leaf Kratom and other natural herbs came into my life My daily reality was crippling pain, fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia and digestive distress. My condition became so severe that In 2018 I was hospitalized for over a month. My physical and mental health had declined to the point I was put on disability and for several years was completely unable to support myself - and while Most people never return to work after going on disability, I recently have -- in largest part due to kratom's role in helping to manage my complex health issues. This has allowed me to contribute to our family and community in ways that would not have been possible otherwise.

In 2016, I entered recovery from alcohol and prescription pills that I was using to manage my symptoms and began detoxing off several pharmaceuticals, including benzodiazepines like Xanax and Klonopin and stimulants like adderall and Ritalin. I was legally prescribed these to manage my symptoms but there effect on me became highly detrimental. I'm extremely familiar with the concept of sobriety and what it means to be sober vs not. With a background in addiction I'm acutely aware of when something plays a medicinal role in my life and when something is destructive. No other substance has ever been more medicinal and helpful in my 15 years of treatment for my mental and physical disabilities as Kratom leaf has been.

It supports my recovery process just like so many other people across the country - and has a massive positive impact on my mental health and discomfort levels without getting me intoxicated or inebriated - something so important to me.

In my opinion It is because of Kratom's ability to take the place of high profit pharmaceuticals and be used as an exit substance that it is so heavily demonized. It is actually because of how beneficial it is that we see calls for bans and a coordinated effort across the country. It's so beneficial that it cuts into the profits of the pharmaceutical companies who heavily lobby and influence our government - for instance If I weren't using

kratom I would likely be, and at one point have been on a stimulant, a benzodiazepine, an anti depressant, a sleep medication, an opiate and more. With the actual costs of these drugs - or cost to the taxpayer if insurance is used - That is a lot of money not being made off my conditions.

This is a classic case of profits over people - just like we saw with cannabis over the past 10 years. California has already become a leader in the alternative and plant medicine space allowing their people to choose what treatments or medicines work best for them - why would we now go in the opposite direction with a comparable plant?

It is in fact the same people who helped to create the opiate crisis who continue to profit off the dependency and addiction that they caused - who see Kratom leaf as a threat to their revolving door of profit, pain management and rehabilitation.

The stakes couldn't be higher for me personally. If I lost access to whole leaf kratom powder it would massively impact my ability to be the father and community member that I am today. It would mean returning to a life of pain, instability, and suffering -- taking away the single most effective tool I have to manage my physical and mental health.

Revelation 22:2 (KJV)

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

I'm here supporting a full ban on kratom. My perspective comes from a loss no parent should ever experience. My daughter Kielee died on March 1st 2025 of a mitragynine overdose. She was only 23. Because she was so young they had to do an investigation. After an autopsy and toxicology screen was performed mitragynine overdose was determined to be the factor of death.

Kratom took my daughter's life and robbed the world of the light she brought into it. She trusted the word natural. Kielee used the natural kratom powder. She believed it was safe to use for pain because that is how the industry markets it. She was not using extracts or 7OH products. The leaf itself killed her. Regulations wouldn't have saved her because she was 23 and didn't buy it from a gas station.

Mitragynine and 7OH both bind to the same opioid receptors as morphine. The idea that the natural powder is harmless while only certain extracts are dangerous is not supported by what is happening in real families. Both forms take lives.

My state of Idaho reported 83 kratom involved deaths between 2020 and 2024. Bonneville County recorded six deaths in eighteen months. Four were from mitragynine alone one of was my daughter. Mitragynine overdose is what I have to read on her death certificate. These deaths mirror what other states are seeing, especially as kratom becomes more available in small shops and gas stations.

I want you to understand this because your decision will shape what families in your community face. Parents don't know what it is. Young people assume it's safe. The reality does not match the marketing.

You may hear the argument that the Kratom Consumer Protection Act is the safer middle ground. It is important to understand what the KCPA actually is. It was written and promoted by the kratom industry, not by medical or toxicology experts. Its purpose is to protect sales,

States that passed the KCPA continue to see addiction, poison center calls, emergency room visits, and kratom related deaths. The KCPA does not place real caps on potency. It does not control online sales. Local agencies have no practical way to enforce it. And banning 7OH alone is pointless because mitragynine naturally converts to 7OH once it

is inside the body.

The industry is already developing new derivatives like MGM 15 and MGM 16. A full ban is the only approach that closes the loopholes and keeps this opioid acting substance out of your community.

I know bans are not easy decisions. But I also know what it feels like to stand in my daughter's empty bedroom and wonder how something sold as a "natural herb" destroyed her life. I would give anything to go back and warn her. I can't. But I can warn you.

I am asking you to put a ban on kratom so

no family has to learn the same lesson through the loss of a child parent spouse or friend. Thank you for taking the time to listen and for putting the safety of your residents first.

Sincerely, Tia

January 20, 2026

Health and Mental Health Cluster Agenda Review
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 140
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: SD4 - Motion Related to Preventing Deaths Related to Kratom and 7-OH

Dear Supervisor Hahn,

My name is Dr. Michele Ross. I'm an addiction scientist and court qualified expert witness on kratom.

I **strongly oppose** any effort to criminalize or ban kratom or 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) products, which CDPH will most likely recommend to you as a result of the proposed motion. Kratom products have been safely and responsibly used by Californians for over 20 years.

Today, an estimated 2.4 million California residents use kratom products, and at least 118,000 residents specifically use 7-OH kratom alkaloid products. Any prohibition, emergency scheduling action, or arbitrary potency cap targeting 7-OH would therefore affect a large and identifiable consumer population, with significant public health, economic, and legal consequences. California has more effective and less restrictive regulatory tools available to address product safety concerns.

7-OH is a naturally occurring and metabolically produced alkaloid associated with the kratom plant. It is not a novel synthetic substance. Current scientific evidence does not support classifying 7-OH as a Schedule I drug. Research survey data indicate that **74% of 7-OH consumers use these products to manage chronic pain, and 23% use it to recover from opioid addiction.**

7-OH is not a novel synthetic drug and is biologically inseparable from kratom consumption, as 24% of mitragynine, the main active ingredient in kratom, is converted into 7-OH in the body. Again, 2.4 million Californians have 7-OH in their bloodstream without a major public health crisis occurring.

The risk of 7-OH has been overstated by the media and policymakers, and is in fact a "manufactured crisis" that has been pushed forth by corporate kratom to take over market share. Primary scientific literature shows that 7-OH is safer than morphine and other opioids, rather than more dangerous.

In fact, zero deaths nationwide have been attributed to 7-OH alone, and the scientific literature has not been able to find a lethal dose (LD50) for oral 7-OH in rodent studies. While there are

safety issues with taking 7-OH with alcohol or other sedatives, this is true of traditional kratom leaf and kratom extracts as well. Even the 6 Los Angeles overdoses have been falsely attributed to 7-OH, and I have attached a report below clarifying misinformation found in CDPH's press releases and guidance.

The primary active alkaloids in kratom, mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), are atypical opioids both in chemical structure and because they both function as **G protein-biased partial mu opioid agonists**, meaning they can never activate the opioid receptor to the same magnitude as a traditional opioid like fentanyl, morphine, or oxycodone that are *full mu opioid agonists*.

This translates to minimal euphoria and even dysphoria at higher doses of kratom or 7-OH, little activation of the beta-arrestin pathway that causes respiratory depression, and low likelihood of overdose and death when taken alone. Compare this to traditional opioid drugs with very real risk of addiction, overdose and death. Kratom including kratom alkaloid products like 7-OH are the *safer* option with established therapeutic use.

Scientific evidence indicates that kratom-related risk is driven primarily by dose and frequency of use, not by product category alone. Human observational and clinical data show that tolerance, withdrawal, and symptoms consistent with kratom use disorder are more strongly associated with repetitive, high-frequency dosing than with whether kratom is consumed as whole leaf, extract, or alkaloid-containing product. There is no controlled human evidence demonstrating that 7-OH products cause greater respiratory depression, overdose risk, or addiction than kratom extracts, blended products like kratom + kava drinks, or kratom itself.

Removing lawful access to 7-OH for more than 118,000 Californians or kratom to more than 2.4 million Californians carries serious foreseeable harms. These include increased opioid overdose risk, higher emergency department utilization, greater demand for addiction treatment services, increased Medi-Cal expenditures, loss of workforce participation, and higher rates of disability and unemployment. Beyond these fiscal impacts are severe human costs, including elevated suicide risk among individuals who lose effective pain management or withdrawal stabilization options.

Our October 2025 research survey of 1,521 7-OH consumers underscores these concerns. **17% would consider suicide if 7-OH were banned. 25% reported they would turn to illicit opioids such as heroin or fentanyl**, and 41% stated they would seek 7-OH from the illicit market. The downstream costs associated with overdose care, long-term addiction treatment, and preventable death would far exceed any speculative benefit of prohibition and would ultimately be borne by California taxpayers.

Evidence supports regulations like 21+ age gating, bans on marketing to children, childproof packaging, third-party testing requirements, labeling requirements and mg dosage caps. As an

addiction expert, I would support bans on routes of administration that elevate addiction risk, such as 7-OH sublingual films and vapes, or even strict regulations on kratom drinks.

For these reasons, banning or criminalizing kratom and/or 7-OH represents a disproportionate and unsupported response that risks worsening, rather than improving, public health outcomes in California. I urge the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors to drop support of AB1088 and drop support of any local ordinance that bans kratom or 7-OH, and pursue evidence-based regulatory approaches that protect consumers without driving them toward more dangerous alternatives.

Respectfully,

Dr. Michele Ross PhD, MBA
Addiction Scientist
Author of *Kratom is Medicine*
Chief Scientific Advisor, 7-HOPE Alliance
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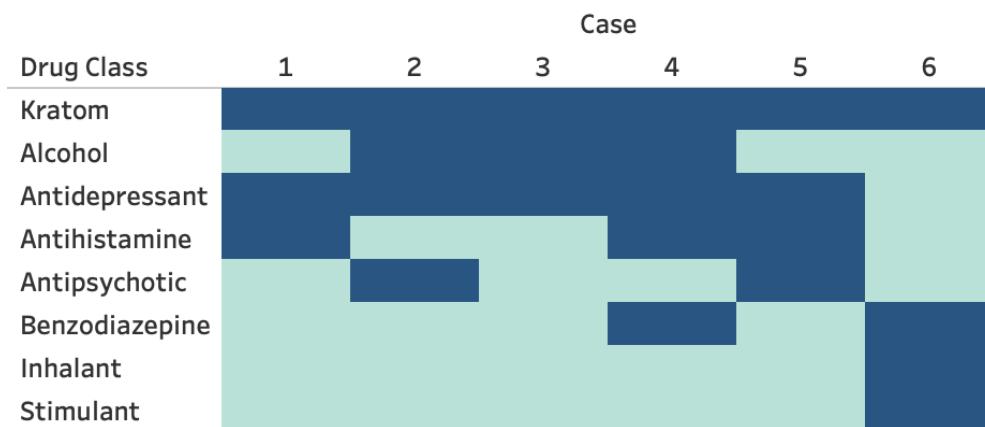
Below I have attached a statement I authored on the “7-OH” Overdose deaths, which after review of the autopsy and toxicology reports, are clearly not 7-OH deaths.

Public Statement from 7-HOPE Alliance on Recent Los Angeles 7-OH Overdose Reports

7-HOPE Alliance extends our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones affected by the recent overdose deaths reported in Los Angeles County. Any loss of life is tragic, and preventing drug-related deaths is a shared public health priority.

At the same time, it is important that public health communications remain **scientifically accurate, transparent, and evidence-based**, particularly when they may influence consumer behavior, medical decision-making, and policy actions.

Based on the publicly released Medical Examiner records and toxicology reports, the six Los Angeles deaths referenced by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health appear to be **polysubstance overdose cases** in which **7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) was detected**, alongside alcohol and/or multiple other drugs known to significantly increase overdose risk, including benzodiazepines, antidepressants, antihistamines, antipsychotics, stimulants, and illicit substances.



To date, **no quantitative blood levels of 7-hydroxymitragynine have been publicly released**, nor has evidence been made available demonstrating the use of a specific 7-OH product in any of these cases. Without concentration data, product attribution, or timing of ingestion, it is **not scientifically possible to determine whether detected 7-OH originated from natural metabolism of kratom (mitragynine) or from isolated 7-OH products**, or to establish causal primacy in these deaths.

Detection alone does not establish cause of death. In forensic toxicology, the presence of a substance in postmortem testing must be interpreted in the context of dose, interactions, and known pharmacology. This is particularly critical in cases involving multiple central nervous system depressants, where synergistic effects are well-documented and frequently responsible for fatal outcomes.

Importantly, this caution is not novel or unique to 7-hydroxymitragynine. **The forensic and medical literature has repeatedly documented cases in which kratom or mitragynine was initially cited as a cause of death, only to later be recognized as a coincidental finding in complex polysubstance overdoses.** Peer-reviewed analyses have shown that many reported “kratom deaths” involved multiple other substances with well-established lethality and that attribution to kratom was often based on presence rather than demonstrated toxic dose or causal mechanism.

These historical misattributions indicate the importance of rigorous standards when interpreting postmortem toxicology findings and communicating risk to the public. Without quantitative data and careful differential analysis, there is a significant risk of overstating the role of a single compound while obscuring the true drivers of overdose risk.

7-HOPE Alliance has formally requested access to the underlying toxicology data and product evidence related to these cases for independent evaluation of safety risks, including high-risk products or manufacturers. To date, that information has not been released.

We strongly support harm-reduction principles, including:

- Avoiding taking with sedatives including alcohol, benzodiazepines, opioids, antihistamines, and sleeping pills
- Using caution with any psychoactive substances
- Seeking medical guidance when managing pain, substance use, or mental health conditions
- Expanding access to naloxone and overdose prevention education

Public health warnings are most effective when they are **transparent about uncertainty** and grounded in verifiable evidence. Labeling complicated deaths from multiple substances as caused by just one substance, without proper evidence, can mislead the public and prevent education on overdose risks.

7-HOPE Alliance remains committed to collaborating with public health officials, researchers, clinicians, and regulators to improve consumer safety, ensure accurate risk communication, and prevent future harm. We continue to call for the release of the relevant data so that these deaths can be evaluated with the rigor and clarity they deserve.

From: ANNE HARRISON <anneharrison@mac.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 1, 2026 9:46 AM
To: ExecutiveOffice <ExecutiveOffice@bos.lacounty.gov>
Subject: I am a fan of New Brew

I fully support banning or heavily restricting 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) extracts and any semi-synthetic/concentrated products. Those are very different from traditional leaf kratom — both chemically and in their effects. Comparing natural leaf to 7-OH products is like comparing Coors Light to Everclear. They simply aren't in the same category.

I travel frequently and have no trouble going without kratom when needed, so I'm not dependent on it. My concern is common-sense regulation, not unrestricted access. Blanket prohibition of the natural leaf would eliminate a helpful plant-based option for many people who use it responsibly — often as an alternative to caffeine or over-the-counter pain relievers — while doing nothing to address the real risks associated with high-potency extracts.

THANKS

Sent from Anne Harrison