



@dreambutterfly botanicals

To: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service #AMS-SC-19-0061.

From: @dreambutterfly botanicals

Re: Fruit and Vegetable Advisory Committee

Date: August 14, 2019

My name is Cheryl Bowie with @dreambutterfly botanicals. I'm part Inupiaq Eskimo from northwest Alaska, thank you for the opportunity to participate however remotely.

I've been working on a project studying the impacts of cannabis on our communities since a fellowship my former employer and healthcare provider nominated me for. I will keep my comments brief but wanted the opportunity to introduce myself and just make mention of the many different state level efforts happening in relation to agriculture, both urban and rural.

As you may know Alaska is a very rural area that has limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables; if you combine this with limited transportation, the need (not only the demand) for fresh agriculture products comes at a premium cost to people in rural areas of our state, greatly impacting their ability to provide locally sustainable produce and access to healthy foods that can improve our diet and health. My first memorable experience with fruit as a child was watching my aunt rehydrate (boil) dried fruit to make pie. This is not a story a lot of people know but it is a very relevant to many lifestyles bound to this practice due to Alaska's remoteness.

I'm currently working on a project studying the impact of cannabis on our communities and cannot help but notice the similar infrastructure needs and requirements. This type of infrastructure is largely in need in our state as I am sure other industries are looking at some of the new urban agriculture designs to incorporate into health, education and commerce.

Rural areas of Alaska are currently experiencing hardships related to transportation, high unemployment rates and the increasing cost of living related to delivering services such as health, education and commerce activities in rural areas and an even greater need to create sustainable environments as things change around them.

I think that utilizing some of the agricultural programs to mitigate some of the health and economic hardships being experienced by some of our most needy people and places is a great



idea and we could incorporate some of the new indoor agriculture designs to meet standards set by other federal agencies to meet upgrade requirements for energy, education and information technology and telecommunications.

Identifying key stakeholders in agriculture to develop new partnerships and identify common goals or at least common infrastructure needs to meet desirable outcomes is critical to having successful outcomes especially in rural areas.

AMS works with many stakeholders that either have access to or share similar infrastructure and security needs. These can provide educational, employment and access to infrastructure that can give people access to current commerce platforms to reduce unemployment in their areas and help create financially and economically competitive platforms regardless of location.

Alaska is the unsung hero of indoor agriculture due to our climate and the military's need to provide food here in the early 1900's. Alaska has a rich history of both indoor and outdoor agriculture in an adverse environment of which the world has drawn on much experience.

Alaska is also an area being spotlighted as a climate change example due to the highly regulated and least developed area I believe in the country. The cost loss of different climate change models however accurate or inclusive often fail to identify ways to help local people create infrastructure models that increase health and safety for them and their families while preserving what they identify as important culturally or within their environment.

These urban agriculture designs used for fresh fruit, produce, biotechnology, drug development and so forth offer relative ease of deployment with some designs that are achievable for people in rural areas and would help mitigate economic hardships in these areas while helping utility, communications, telehealth and other providers identify new opportunities to increase access in rural areas.

I just wanted to take a minute to introduce myself and let you know people around the country are looking at all of these systems as drug regulation and cannabis or hemp are discussed. It's a wonderful time to identify different synergies to accomplish shared goals. I look forward to watching things unfold through these efforts.