

March 3, 2026

Honorable Mayor Jon Levell
Mayor Pro Tem Ron Holliday
Council Member Lisa DeForest
Council Member Lori Stone
Council Member Cindy Warren
City of Murrieta
1 Town Square
Murrieta, CA 92562

RE: SUPPORT FOR AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 – ORDINANCE NO. 629-26 REGULATING THE SALE OR DISTRIBUTION OF KRATOM AND SYNTHETIC 7-OH AND THE CREATION OF 9.40 OF THE MURRIETA MUNICIPAL CODE.

Dear Mayor Levell and Members of the City Council:

I am unable to be at this evening's Council Meeting in person, therefore I am providing my strong support in writing to respectfully express the adoption of Agenda Item No. 6, Ordinance No. 629-26 regulating the sale and distribution of Kratom and the prohibition of the sale and distribution of synthetic 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) within the City of Murrieta. This ordinance appropriately does not regulate the mere possession of 7-OH, nor does it impact our criminal justice system. It simply places restrictions on the sales of these substances within our city limits.

As a Murrieta resident and retired Murrieta Police Captain and former Undersheriff with the Riverside County Sheriff's Office, I have spent my career addressing emerging drug trends before they took root in our communities. As a lifetime member of the California Narcotic Officers Association (CNOA) I have kept myself apprised of emerging drug trends and drugs of addiction. The proliferation of concentrated synthetic 7-OH products now presents precisely that kind of emerging public safety threat, especially with some of our most vulnerable population, our children and young adults.

Synthetic 7-OH is not a benign herbal supplement. It is a concentrated, lab-enhanced derivative of Kratom's psychoactive compound that binds to opioid receptors in the brain in a manner similar to traditional opioids. These products are being sold in gas stations, smoke shops, and other retail outlets in attractive forms such as gummies, flavored shots, and candies. They are often marketed as "legal" or "natural," yet their potency, inconsistent dosing, and lack of meaningful oversight create substantial risks for dependency, respiratory depression, and overdose—particularly when combined with alcohol or other depressants.

Over a decade ago, most in law enforcement had never heard of, and were unaware of, the dangers of the synthetic opiate, fentanyl. At that time, I personally oversaw an investigation here in Murrieta which led to the tragic car collision and death of someone under the influence of that drug. Since that time, we all have come to know the devastating impact of that drug and what the lack of regulation on prescription synthetic opiates has done to our society. If left unregulated, Synthetic 7-OH could be the next epidemic.

The Food and Drug Administration has issued warning letters regarding the unlawful marketing of concentrated synthetic 7-OH products and has formally requested federal scheduling due to their high abuse potential. We all know partisan politics and lobbying efforts from those who stand to make money off the misfortune of others has caused the inaction of comprehensive regulation of Kratom and 7-OH by our legislature, therefore local jurisdictions are left to address the gap.

Throughout my law enforcement career, Murrieta has consistently acted proactively when state law lagged behind emerging threats. Whether addressing secondhand dealers, massage establishments, cyber cafés, cannabis dispensaries, or youth-related public safety concerns, Murrieta City Councils have not hesitated to adopt thoughtful municipal ordinances to safeguard our community. Last year, this Council had to do the same with the regulation of E-Bikes since the state legislature has failed to appropriately regulate them in the California Vehicle Code. Agenda Item No. 6 reflects that same prudent and prevention-focused leadership.

This proposed ordinance is consistent with action taken by other local jurisdictions, and the bipartisan Riverside County Board of Supervisors, which voted to regulate Kratom and prohibit the sale of concentrated synthetic 7-OH. It also provides Murrieta Police Department officers with a necessary enforcement tool. As we have learned through tobacco and alcohol decoy operations, voluntary compliance and industry self-regulation are not sufficient where high profits are involved and youth access is at stake.

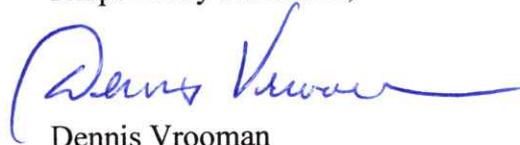
I have personally spoken with Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco and Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin about this proposed ordinance. Both have expressed their strong support for Murrieta's adoption of this ordinance and have authorized me to convey their support in this letter. Their positions reflect a unified law enforcement perspective that concentrated synthetic 7-OH presents a clear and growing risk to public health and safety.

This ordinance does not represent an overreach; it represents responsible governance. It targets a concentrated synthetic compound that poses unique dangers, while establishing reasonable regulatory safeguards for natural Kratom. By taking action now, the City of Murrieta will help prevent avoidable harm, protect young people, and reduce the likelihood that this product becomes the next wave in the opioid crisis.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the City Council to conduct the first reading and move forward with adoption of Ordinance No. 629-26 as proposed under Agenda Item No. 6.

On a personal level, thank you for your continued service, leadership and your commitment to the safety and well-being of Murrieta residents, including my children and grandchildren, some of who live here in our community. I truly do appreciate your time and dedication to our fine City.

Respectfully submitted,



Dennis Vrooman
Murrieta Resident
Retired Murrieta Police Captain
Retired Riverside County Undersheriff