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CITY OF AMESBURY
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SPONSORED BY: _____ **BILL No.** 2026-161
Steven Stanganelli, Councilor-at-Large

_____
Michael Hogg, Councilor, D6

A Resolution in Opposition to November 2026 Ballot Question 8

Summary: Opposing Massachusetts Ballot Question 8, entitled "An Act to Restore a Sensible Marijuana Policy," which would repeal licensed adult-cannabis retail sales and home cannabis cultivation statewide; affirming the City's commitment to a regulated, locally-controlled cannabis marketplace; and urging the voters of Amesbury and the Commonwealth to VOTE NO on BALLOT QUESTION 8 on November 3,2026.

Be it resolved by the City Council assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

WHEREAS, the Amesbury City Council has a long history of supporting the legalization of adult cannabis use as initially authorized by the results of the November 8, 2016, statewide ballot referendum (Question 4), which was approved by 53.7 percent of Massachusetts voters, and pursuant to which the Legislature enacted Chapter 94G of the General Laws and established the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) to regulate, license, tax, and oversee adult-use cannabis; and

WHEREAS, the City of Amesbury has, over the course of more than a decade, demonstrated a consistent and affirmative legislative commitment to integrating legal cannabis commerce responsibly into its zoning and licensing framework in a manner consistent with state law and the democratic will of the voters; and

WHEREAS, the Amesbury City Council has enacted a comprehensive series of ordinances, zoning amendments, and licensing measures — each reflecting a sustained commitment to responsible cannabis regulation, local economic opportunity, and public order — the full record of which, together with all sponsors and co-sponsors of record and a complete list of Host Community Agreements, is set forth in Addendum A to this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, if approved by voters, Ballot Question 8 would repeal the statutory framework under Chapters 94G and 64N of the General Laws that permits the licensed sale of adult-use cannabis and the personal home cultivation of cannabis, effectively dismantling the regulated adult-use cannabis marketplace beginning January 1, 2028 — directly threatening the continued operation of CNA Stores and Alternative Therapies Group in Amesbury, eliminating the jobs those businesses provide, ending

their charitable contributions to Amesbury's nonprofit community, and depriving the City of the local option tax revenue they generate; and

WHEREAS, approval of Ballot Question 8 would not eliminate cannabis consumption among adults but would instead redirect consumers to the illegal, unregulated market where products are not tested for potency, consistency, or contaminants, age verification is absent, and no tax revenue is generated for public benefit — outcomes directly contrary to the public health and safety goals that the regulatory framework championed by this Council was designed to achieve; and

WHEREAS, a February 2026 survey conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center found that only **20 percent** of likely Massachusetts voters support repealing adult-use cannabis legalization, while **63 percent** actively oppose repeal, confirming that Ballot Question 8 does not reflect the will of the people of Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the Amesbury City Council has a duty to protect the economic interests, fiscal stability, local regulatory authority, and general welfare of the residents, businesses, and workers of Amesbury, and to speak clearly in defense of policies consistent with the democratic will of the voters of Amesbury and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Amesbury, Massachusetts, in regular session assembled, as follows:

Section 1 — Opposition to Ballot Question 8

The Amesbury City Council hereby formally and unambiguously **opposes** Massachusetts Ballot Question 8, "An Act to Restore a Sensible Marijuana Policy," which will appear on the November 3, 2026 statewide general election ballot, and **urges the voters of Amesbury and all residents of the Commonwealth to cast a NO vote on Ballot Question 8** on or before Election Day, November 3, 2026.

Section 2 — Protection of Municipal Fiscal Interests

The Amesbury City Council declares that the repeal of adult-use cannabis sales would constitute a direct and significant harm to the City of Amesbury's fiscal condition — including the immediate loss of the **3% local option cannabis sales tax revenue** deposited in the City's general fund that supports public schools, roads, and essential city services — and urges the Massachusetts Legislature and the Governor to publicly and actively oppose Ballot Question 8 in the interest of municipal fiscal health statewide.