



February 23, 2026

Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson  
Riverside City Council Members  
3900 Main Street  
Riverside, CA 92522

Dear Mayor Lock Dawson & Council Members,

On behalf of the California Narcotic Officers' Association (CNOA) and the Riverside Sheriffs' Association (RSA), I am writing to express our strong support to prohibit the sale, distribution of concentrated synthetic 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) and to regulate natural kratom leaf in the City of Riverside.

7-OH, the psychoactive component of kratom leaves, is being synthetically concentrated into various products that are sold in gas stations, smoke shops, and other retail and online venues. High doses of concentrated synthetic 7-OH and/or co-used with alcohol or other sedatives can cause severe respiratory depression and death. As they are unregulated, many contain unknown concentrations of synthetic 7-OH, increasing the risk of unintentional overdose.

Medical research has shown that 7-OH binds to the same receptors in the brain as traditional opioids, creating a risk for dependency, withdrawal, and overdose when combined with other substances. Despite being marketed as a "natural" product, concentrated synthetic 7-OH has no approved medical use and is widely recognized by public health authorities as dangerous.

In July 2025, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued warning letters to firms for illegal marketing of concentrated synthetic 7-OH products and posted product images. The FDA indicated that "7-OH is not lawful in dietary supplements and cannot be lawfully added to conventional foods. Additionally, there are no FDA-approved drugs containing 7-OH, and it is illegal to market any drugs containing 7-OH. ***Consumers who use 7-OH products are exposing themselves to products that have not been proven safe or effective for any use.***" Just this past summer, the ***FDA formally requested that the DEA designate concentrated synthetic 7-OH as Schedule 1.***

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health recently issued a news release entitled, ***Multiple Fatal Overdoses Tied to Synthetic Kratom Compound in Los Angeles County*** which warned its residents about the fatal dangers posed by this synthetic opioid which has resulted in at least 6 deaths.

***The Los Angeles Times*** recently reported on these 6 deaths attributed to concentrated synthetic 7-OH and the highlighted the lack of action by the state legislature.

The RSA & CNOA have been extremely active in addressing the recent explosion of the use of kratom and the abuse of concentrated synthetic 7-OH throughout the state. We have been strong advocates for AB 1088 which would restrict sales to persons 21 and over and prohibit the marketing of natural kratom to children. The bill also prohibits the sale or distribution of concentrated synthetic 7-OH products. AB 1088 passed the full Assembly, with the unanimous support of Riverside County's Assembly members. The bill is expected to be acted upon by the Senate Health Committee later this spring.

The Riverside County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Ordinance No. 1004 in October 2025 to regulate the sale and distribution of kratom products in the unincorporated areas of the county which effectively prohibits the sale of concentrated, synthetic 7-OH products. The regulation was developed in response to safety concerns regarding highly concentrated and synthetic kratom-based products, specifically 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH).

Both Sheriff Chad Bianco and District Attorney Mike Hestrin supported the county ordinance.

We also worked with Orange County Supervisors, resulting in the unanimous passage of their Ord. 25-014 which adopted the Riverside County model. The County of Fresno passed a similar ordinance earlier this year and the cities of La Quinta and Moreno Valley recently adopted ordinances mirroring this approach. More cities throughout the county, including the cities of Palm Desert, Murrieta, Blythe, Indio and others are preparing to do the same.

As mentioned above, we support restricting natural kratom sales to persons 21 and over. However, ***we are not seeking a ban on natural kratom*** as that product does not pose a deadly threat to our communities like 7-OH does. Please note that we are not looking to criminalize possession of these substances. The users of concentrated, synthetic 7-OH aren't the problem here. In fact, they are the targeted victims of unscrupulous manufacturers and sellers seeking to profit from this extremely addictive and dangerous drug.

Instead, our efforts throughout the state have mirrored the FDA's approach, focusing on raising awareness and leading the charge to ban concentrated synthetic 7-OH which presents a unique health risk and has been determined to have contributed to numerous deaths.

Communities across the state have taken steps to restrict kratom and ban concentrated synthetic 7-OH in the interest of protecting residents, especially young people, from its dangers. By adopting such an ordinance, Riverside's law would be consistent with the county ordinance, joining other local governments in prioritizing public safety and public health.

On a daily basis, our members witness the dangers these substances pose to our children, families and communities which is why the RSA & CNOA urge you to prohibit the sale and distribution of concentrated synthetic 7-OH and limit natural kratom purchases to persons over 21. Taking action now will help prevent future deaths and reduce harm - especially for our youth.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your support for this proposal.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel to contact me at 916.580.5464.

Sincerely,



Ryan Sherman  
Legislative Advocate

Riverside Sheriffs' Association  
California Narcotic Officers' Association

---

**From:** CityClerkMbx  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 8:18 AM  
**To:** Aguilar-Crunk, Nancy  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] RE: Kratom ordinance. Please do not ban plain leaf Kratom  
**Attachments:** Melody and Makary.jpg

---

**From:** David Woolf <go4itbass@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:42 AM  
**To:** CityClerkMbx <City\_Clerk@riversideca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Kratom ordinance. Please do not ban plain leaf Kratom

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Riverside. It was not sent by any City official or staff. Use caution when opening attachments or links.**

[Report Suspicious](#)

Dear members of the City Council,

I am writing to ask you not to ban the sale of Plain Leaf Kratom, which has a long history in our country of safe use for helping with chronic pain. I do agree with banning the dangerous metabolite 7-OH (7-hydroxymitragynine), also slated to be banned at the federal level. In fact, in a recent Oval Office press conference, FDA Commissioner Makary just mentioned that 7-OH was the problem, not plain leaf Kratom.

Thank you for allowing me to add my voice to this very important issue. I bring with me 12 years of positive lived experience with plain leaf Kratom. I was the only Kratom advocate in the country to be welcomed to the HHS press briefing stage last July by FDA Commissioner Makary. Soon I will be attending the Kratom Science Symposium at the University of Florida, where any concerns could be brought to leading scientists in person.

For over 20 years, I lived with chronic pain from fibromyalgia, arthritis, sciatica, and other conditions. Before consuming kratom, I was often bedridden and required assistance, which affected my ability to participate fully in family life.

Twelve years ago, I began consuming plain-leaf kratom, and it gave me back my mobility and ability to fully engage with my family. In 2022, when my daughter and son-in-law's childcare closed unexpectedly, I provided full-time care for my granddaughter, saving them approximately \$50,000. This past summer, with major home repairs and high childcare costs, I again cared for my 3½-year-old granddaughter for four months, chasing her all over town — weekly trips to the Zoo, the library, and every nearby splash pad.

I participate in local and state-level meetings on kratom regulation and spoke one-on-one with roughly 200 state legislators at the NCSL conference. I will be attending a scientific symposium again this year, where I will share my personal experience alongside researchers and regulators. I was also asked to speak at a joint HHS/FDA press briefing about the benefits of kratom and to distinguish it from the dangerous 7OH.

Outside of advocacy, I sing in a chorus, performing for nursing homes and assisted living facilities as a form of community service, helping bring joy and connection to others.

My personal experience demonstrates the profound impact kratom has on function, family life, and community engagement, and underscores the importance of patient perspectives in informing science and policy.

Please support protecting plain leaf Kratom, with common sense, science-led regulations such as an age gate, and truthful packaging, while prohibiting products containing over 2% of 7-OH.

Please do not ban plain leaf Kratom for those who take it responsibly. My number is 269 873-9592. More information and the science is found on my LinkedIn Profile:

[https://www.linkedin.com/in/melody-woolf-366a7b146?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_campaign=share\\_via&utm\\_content=profile&utm\\_medium=ios\\_app](https://www.linkedin.com/in/melody-woolf-366a7b146?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app)

Best regards,

Melody Woolf

Stay in-the-know with all things Riverside! Connect with us at [RiversideCA.gov/Connect](https://RiversideCA.gov/Connect).