



NY Small Farma Ltd

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

August 26, 2021

Re: Endorsement of Mandana Boushee and SirRoan Smiley to serve on the State
Cannabis Advisory Board of the Office of Cannabis Management

Dear Governor Hochul:

NY Small Farma strongly endorses the nomination of Mandana Boushee and SirRoan Smiley to the State Cannabis Advisory Board of the Office of Cannabis Management.

Both Mr. Smiley and Ms. Boushee have the depth and breadth of experience to contribute as outstanding members to the Advisory Board and advise the Office of Cannabis Management and Cannabis Control Board on important matters of social justice and regenerative farming practices to improve our state's soil health and climate resiliency.

New York's new cannabis law provides the framework create a truly socially just, environmentally regenerative and economically inclusive cannabis community. To manifest these laudable goals we need leaders and experts within the community that are focused on the community, not personal profits. Mandana Boushee is a woman of color, raised in Newburgh NY and is an active member of communities that directly align with the goals of the MRTA.

Ms. Boushee is an active member of NEFOC, Hudson Valley Herb Alliance, United Plant Savers, Herban Cura, Biodynamic Association, NOFA NY, Wild Gather: Hudson Valley School of Herbal Studies, SWANA Ancestral Hub, BIPOC Medicine Makers Collective and others.

Mr. Smiley is a Founding Herbalist of Dropping Seeds Multi-Use Herbal Blends. He is the Founder and Director of WE ARE EARTH, an urban farms cooperative. WE ARE EARTH is a BIPOC and women owned decentralized urban agricultural cooperative that empowers food & wellness sovereignty across New York. The cooperative develops solutions, creates opportunities and provides resources to foster local food economy within our community. Mr. Smiley is also the Consulting director of partnerships for Universe City NYC.

The statements of these candidates about service on the State Cannabis Advisory Board and their full resumes are included with this letter.

It is vital that there is representation on Cannabis Advisory Board by advisors with these experiences and values, grounded in respect, inclusivity, and care and focused on NY's most vulnerable communities. Having these voices at the table can make the difference between a regulatory scheme that gives only lip service to the full goals of the MRTA or one that makes New York's cannabis industry a beacon of how centering an industry on social justice, economic inclusivity, and environmental regeneration can provide not only redress to communities harmed during prohibition but limitless opportunities, wealth, and jobs to a multitude of New Yorkers.

Please appoint Mandana Boushee and SirRoan Smiley for the State Cannabis Advisory Board. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss and ask that you please contact our Vice President Nicole Ricci with any questions or to arrange a meeting, Nicole@nysmallfarma.org.

Respectfully,



Donna Burns,
President
NY Small Farma Ltd.

cc: Honorable Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo
Honorable Assembly Majority Leader Crystal People-Stokes
Honorable Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie
Honorable Senator Michelle Hinchey
Honorable Majority Leader Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Honorable Senator Liz Krueger
Honorable Senator Gustavo Rivera
Honorable Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
Honorable Assemblyman Steven C. Englebright
Honorable Senator Todd Kaminsky
Honorable Senator Diane Savino
Honorable Senator Rachel May
Honorable Deputy Secretary for Food and Agriculture Patrick Hooker
Honorable Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets Richard Ball

Mandana Boushee * Phoenicia, NY * (845) 389-5378 * Mandanaboushee@gmail.com

Mandana Boushee is an Iranian-American community herbalist, storyteller, gardener, and co-founder/educator at Wild Gather, Hudson Valley School of Herbal Studies. Mandana was raised in Newburgh, NY and continues to call the Mahicantuck (Hudson) Valley home. Her exploration of plant medicine and community care began in her childhood kitchen where she first heard the stories of her ancestors, as told to her by her mother, accompanied by the rhythm of the mortar and pestle.

Weaving her Iranian identity, culture, and plant tradition into all facets of her work as a community herbalist, Mandana is dedicated to re-centering the voices, stories, rituals, and histories of the BIPOC community, through organizing healing spaces and learning immersions. She finds her north star by supporting her community's journey back to the land, empowering others in their re-connecting, re-membering, and re-claiming of intricate ancestral technologies. Through her shared wisdom and initiatives in the Mahicantuck Valley, she is helping her community gain access to equitable care, herbal medicine, and herbal education.

Mandana is an active member of NEFOC, Hudson Valley Herb Alliance, United Plant Savers, Herban Cura, Biodynamic Association, NOFA NY, Wild Gather : Hudson Valley School of Herbal Studies, SWANA Ancestral Hub, BIPOC Medicine Makers Collective, The Psychedelic Psychoforum, Rootwork Herbals, In Living Color Space, and The People's Wellness Initiative.

Experience

- **Co-founder + Garden Designer at [Garden Keepers](#) 2013-present**
- **Co-founder + Educator of [Wild Gather : Hudson Valley School of Herbal Studies](#), 2015-present**

Our program re-centers learning through a femme-centered, anti-oppressive framework, calling on both our lived experiences and dedication to our communities. Our priority as teachers is to create a curious, open-hearted and textured experience where students can comfortably begin to form their own personal relationships to plants and their many habitats, gifts and lessons. As Herbalists and medicine makers, we center working with the abundant, often deemed invasive plants that make up our bioregion here in the Mahicantuck Valley (also known as the Hudson Valley), while also tending and preserving our endangered and rare plant friends.

As facilitators, we each bring our unique histories, experiences, cultures and stories with us to the classroom. Our instruction combines elements of our personal cultural traditions of plant medicine, traditional and common uses of medicinal and wild food plants, and our own ever-evolving spiritual practices.

- **Co-founder + Co-Facilitator of the [In Living Color Space](#), 2018- present**

The In Living Color (ILC) space is a grassroots safe space organized by health and social justice activists Amanda David and Mandana Boushee. The ILC space is designed to center the needs & voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) by creating a [safe, meaningful space](#) to go deep in our work, to celebrate lineages and experiences, and to find mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical support tailored to the unique needs of BIPOC conference-goers participating in spaces that have historically excluded us. No space, no matter how progressive is without its challenges and unnamed biases. We have devised the ILC space as a space of safe transformation, community care, education, and grassroots organization.

We have facilitated spaces at various gatherings looking to decolonize their events such as, International Herb Symposium, New England Women's Herbal Conference, the Biodynamic Conference, NOFA-NY, NOFA-VT and the Psychedelic Psychotherapy Forum.

- ***Equity and Diversity Consultant, January 2016- present***

I have worked as a equity and diversity consultant for The Biodynamic Association, NOFA-NY, NOFA-VT, Psychedelic Psychotherapy Forum, Psychedelic Psychotherapy Forum

- ***Advisory Board Member for the New England Women's Herbal Conference, January 2018-December 2019***
- ***Advisory Board Member for the International Herbal Symposium, January 2018-December 2019***
- ***Author of Tick Magic, 2018***

Tick magic provides 67 illustrated pages of info and resources for prevention, after bite care, and herbs and rituals we can tap into to cultivate spiritual and psychic support/protection.

- ***Co-creator and facilitator of [Woke Without The Work](#)***

Work Without The Work is a virtual workshop created for Non-BIPOC individuals, who are seeking to move beyond optical support of BIPOC communities, towards active, tangible, and embodied practices of equity. To date, over 500 people have participated in the program.

- ***Elias Foundation Fellow, February 2021-2024***
- ***Better Selves Fellow, 2020***
- ***Freelance writer for Learning Herbs 2019-2020***
- ***Thrive Landscape Design 2010-2012 Woodstock, NY Garden work***
- ***Eva's Garden 2005-2010 South Dartmouth, MA. Culinary herb rearing and harvesting***

Letter re Cannabis Advisory Board Recommendation
Mandana Boushee

Dear Governor Hochul:

When I first heard word of the work being done in partnership with NY Small Farma and NY state in regards to our new cannabis laws, I instantly knew that I wanted to take part in the critical and necessary work of building a framework and vision for a holistic cannabis future that is rooted in social and environmental justice and the betterment of our communities.

My excitement in participating in the advisory board comes from over 15 years' experience of mentorship and education I had the privilege to obtain from learning from the original growers in Humboldt County, to my decades long work as an herbalist, educator and gardener, and from my perspective of being a woman of color born and raised in Newburgh, NY.

We have a lot of work to do as a culture in our unlearning and unraveling of our bias around this long revered sacred plant. Having witnessed what has occurred in states that have already legalized, we must do this work before it's too late. The environmental impacts of cannabis being commodified and capitalized upon can be irreversible if we don't create local regulation that honors both the plants and our fragile ecosystem.

Finally, for too many decades communities of color have been disproportionately affected by the illegalization of cannabis, and there is much repair and reparations to be done to heal that legacy. It is my belief that the advisory board should be a reflection and representation of that complex history, that highlights the arc of people and cultures who have been working with this plant pre-legalization and who will continue to for generations to come.

With great care and respect,

Mandana Boushee

SIRROAN SMILEY

EXPERIENCE

FOUNDER OF WE ARE EARTH COOPERATIVE – 2019-PRESENT

Leveraging business development with food sovereignty organizing we established a decentralized food hub. I initiate and manage partnership relations and develop organizational capabilities within a BIPOC democratic corporation.

PRODUCT OFFICER, VEDA WARRIOR – 2020-2021

Contribute medicinal plant based formulation, supply chain and business development in collaboration with the medical experts and the founders.

DIRECTOR OF E-COMMERCE, HIGH TIMES – 2016-2017

Fund and launch street-ware apparel line. Planned and managed e-commerce + pop-up retail sales. Oversaw marketing, and fulfillment operations. Identified customer feedback that improved processes & profit margins. Led sales reports and performance feedback for consultants and stakeholders.

CO-FOUNDER Dropping-Seeds Multi-Use HERBS – 2013-2020

Formulated and developed herbal products for highest quality, sustainability and profit margins. Drove sales and customer awareness via experiential, educational and marketing campaigns.

VP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, 7ONE8 DESIGN INC. – 2010-2020

Integrated business development capabilities to expand the marketing and branding agency services. Directed sales driven product development to increase average contracts and contract sizes by 27 and 32% respectively.

AFROPUNK, MINKA BROOKLYN

Experiential earth based healing activation
INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY DESIGN
Permaculture design consultant, herbalist frequency, and community healing advocate

REGENERATIVE TECHNICAL EDUCATOR

Coordinate earth centric pedagogy for youth and adults

EDUCATION

BROOKLYN COLLEGE, BROOKLYN, NY
– BA, 2006

URBAN SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN, NY
– CERTIFICATION, 2006

PASSIVE SOLAR ARCHITECTURE, NM
– CERTIFICATION, 2006

SKILLS

Strategic planning, Relationship management, Regenerative design, Urban farming, Medicinal identification, Land use planning, Environmental assessment, Cooperative business practices.

INTERESTS

Regenerative Arts, Martial arts, & Healing arts.

Dear Governor Hochul,

I am deeply committed and motivated to lend my perspective and energy to further the goals of the MRTA by assisting to advise on an equitable future for marginalized communities in the cannabis industries.

Further, traditional cross-sections of economic inclusion, the value of cannabinoid medicines, and environmental justice within communities of people of color are at a critical juncture and without the voices of those working as entrepreneurs, healers, and grassroots organizers to address these issues.

I seek to contribute resources, research, and advocacy that might provide critical insights to inform policy to lift the communities in the highest need outlined as priorities in the recreational "marijuana" (reverently called cannabis) legislation.

The selective criminalization and racist narratives associated with the sacred medicine of good people have the opportunity to chip away with the active stewardship of organizations like NY Small Farma, and I'm eager to direct my work toward this urgent agenda.

In conclusion, there is a long road to justice, and the work ahead is neither speedy nor straightforward. That said, I'm honored to be considered a proponent for equity, representation, environmental justice necessary in balancing the rights of small operators, especially for people of color, with the access granted to domination-driven corporate interests and speculators.

In love and solidarity,

SirRoan Smiley