



# NEWS RELEASE

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## ST. CHARLES COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO ASK COUNCIL TO BAN KRATOM

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – County Executive Steve Ehlmann will ask the County Council next Monday evening to consider passing an ordinance that would ban the drug Kratom and related substances in St. Charles County. Kratom, an herb, affects the same opioid brain receptors as morphine and appears to have properties that expose users to the risks of addiction, abuse and dependence, studies show.

Advocates say the herb offers relief from pain, depression and anxiety. But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a warning to consumers not to use Kratom because of the dangerous risks mentioned above.

“In St. Charles County, we don’t think a warning is enough,” Ehlmann says. “Dr. Mary Case, St. Charles County’s Chief Medical Examiner, told me Kratom has played a role in at least nine deaths since the end of 2017. While this is certainly a global issue that is being addressed by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), FDA and individual states, including Missouri, it’s hitting home. Local governmental bodies can speed up the process of making this drug illegal by taking a stand now. That is why I am urging the Council to move forward and ban this substance in St. Charles County.”

States that have banned the sale and use of Kratom are Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, and Vermont. There is pending legislation in New York, New Jersey, Arizona, Mississippi and Georgia, and other states are conducting studies regarding its use.

In Missouri, Rep. Phil Christofanelli, (R–105) has introduced a truth-in-labeling bill which creates new provisions related to the sale of Kratom and would ban the sale to anyone under the age of 18. That bill is still being discussed in the House.

An existing St. Charles County ordinance (Section 375.280 of the Ordinances of St. Charles County, Missouri) bans the sale or use of illegal smoking products containing synthetic cannabinoids. The proposed ordinance adds Kratom and the psychoactive compounds mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine to the list of banned substances. It states that Kratom has no FDA-approved uses, has been linked to a rare strain of salmonella, and is tied to at least 1,807 calls to poison control centers in the U.S. More than half those calls involving serious medical outcomes, including 11 deaths.

“Banning the sale, possession and use of Kratom is necessary to protect the citizens of St. Charles County,” Ehlmann says.

The bill will be introduced at the 7 p.m., Monday, May 13 regular meeting of the Council; a vote to approve or reject the ordinance could take place at the Council meeting on Tuesday, May 28.

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### **About St. Charles County:**

*Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state’s third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.*

*With a population of 395,504, St Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.*

*St. Charles County Government employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit [sccmo.org](http://sccmo.org).*