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KRATOM TRADE ASSOCIATION: KRATOM COMMUNITY NEEDS LESS “DOOMSDAY RHETORIC,” MORE UNIFIED APPROACH IN ORDER TO SURVIVE

“Time to Turn Down the Rhetoric and Step Up the Cooperation”: KTA Outlines Major Progress on Opposing Federal Scheduling of Kratom, State Bans, Import Restrictions, and Inferior/Adulterated Product.

Washington, D.C. — WASHINGTON, D.C. — December 12, 2018 — Kratom, the natural, coffee-like herb associated with better health and well-being, faces many challenges today and it has its best shot at survival if the community tones down the “doomsday rhetoric” and starts working in a more coordinated way to ensure the survival of the botanical, according to the Kratom Trade Association (KTA), which is the only registered trade group representing kratom manufacturers, distributors and retailers.

Today, KTA outlined several steps that it is taking to help ensure that calmer heads prevail, thereby ensuring the continued legality and availability of kratom. As the voice of the kratom business community, KTA is uniquely positioned to play a role with regulators and elected officials that a consumer group typically does not. KTA presents itself in a level-headed professional manner so that it is taken seriously and can get things done. KTA is currently working with other kratom groups to boost cooperative efforts and acknowledges the importance of their efforts.

But KTA is concerned that cooperation is only part of what needs to improve.

KTA organizer Eduardo Brambila said: “Keeping people whipped up into a constant state of hysteria about kratom is short-sighted when it comes to dealing productively with state regulatory bodies, federal agencies, Capitol Hill offices, and the news media. You can only tell people the sky is falling and that everyone is out to get you so many times before they tune you out and stop taking you seriously. Working with other organizations out there, KTA wants to bring together the kratom community so that we can elevate the kratom discussion and get the job done. We are 100 percent committed to cooperation and will take the lead anywhere we can in the process to get the needed results.”

Brambila added: “The notion that kratom could be made illegal in the short term is such a remote possibility that it is irresponsible to terrorize consumers and industry players. KTA will not engage in tactics of this sort and we call on kratom advocates to tone down the rhetoric and turn up the cooperation. We need to focus on working together to support kratom. That is where our time, efforts and resources should be concentrated. The-end-is-nigh messages are dangerous because they can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. At some point, all they do is embolden anti-kratom forces to act because they think we actually do believe that we are doomed,

and the fight is over. In fact, just the reverse is true and that needs to be our message!”

Brambila outlined the following areas where KTA can help advance kratom cooperation:

- **FEDERAL LEGISLATION/DEA RELATIONS.** The Kratom Trade Association has engaged the services of the respected Washington, D.C., law firm Holland and Knight, which is expert in food and drug issues, including import restrictions (see below) and also has former Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) staffers in its ranks. Holland and Knight allows KTA to navigate the kratom waters on Capitol Hill and to reach out to the DEA, which has the ultimate responsibility for the decision about scheduling kratom. KTA wants to be taken seriously by the DEA so that the community can work with federal agency, rather than being shut out of the process there.
- **STATE/LOCAL RELATIONS.** KTA also works with National Strategies, a state and local government relations firm that tracks kratom related legislation and rulemaking outside of Washington, D.C. Through National Strategies and other channels, the Kratom Trade Association is taking the lead in handling ban reversal efforts in two key states. KTA is also the group out front for the kratom community in another key major state and in two markets that either have kratom bans or considering them.
- **IMPORT ALERTS/SEIZURES.** As the chief voice for the kratom industry, KTA is now formulating a strategy to roll back the abuse of import alert and seizures by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). KTA recently held an expert-facilitated webinar for the industry that outlined the current import alert/seizure practices that the FDA is using in a bid to impose a “back door ban” on kratom by cutting off much of the current supply.
- **GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICES.** As the only registered trade association for the kratom industry, KTA is the logical organization to impose and police Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards. Brambila said that it is the duty of KTA, as the official trade association for the kratom industry, to unite the business community behind a successful GMP program. This makes sense because the KTA program is (1) focused only on boosting GMP adoption and (2) KTA is devoting the necessary resources (i.e., legal assistance) to ensure that its members understand and comply with GMP. Brambila noted that GMP adherence is a condition for KTA membership and is not something that members can “buy” separately. Brambila predicted that the KTA GMP program will be seen as a bona fide certification process by regulators, lawmakers and the news media since it is more focused on regulatory compliance than marketing.

In addition to the above, Brambila noted that KTA is an active participant and financial supporter of kratom community efforts, including periodic industry coordination calls, a recent Capitol Hill briefing event, and professional legal support available to members.

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The **Kratom Trade Association** (KTA) is dedicated to the safe and responsible use of Kratom botanical products in the U.S. KTA is committed to regulatory compliance and will develop and promote use of best practices and quality standards for the industry. KTA will support Kratom research initiatives and conduct advocacy efforts to educate policy makers and the public about the benefits of Kratom, as well as dispelling common misconceptions. Visit www.kratomtrade.org for more information.