



DUTCHESS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

To: Members of the Dutchess County Legislature
From: Sue Serino, Dutchess County Executive
Date: September 10, 2026
Re: Resolution 2026136

Over the past several weeks, I have taken the necessary time to thoroughly review Resolution 2026136. After holding the required public hearing, speaking with constituents and advocates, and conferring with the Dutchess County Department of Health, I have decided to return Resolution 2026136, relating to the sale and distribution of concentrated and synthetic kratom products in Dutchess County, with my signature.

Protecting our community from kratom, a substance that has been largely unregulated and has caused significant harm in communities across the nation, remains a top priority. That is why, in July, I submitted a proposal to the Legislature calling for a complete ban on the sale of all kratom products in Dutchess County. While the County Legislature did not embrace a full ban, instead advancing similar legislation that prohibits only synthetic kratom, I do recognize that any step forward is better than maintaining the status quo. To be clear, the adopted legislation does not go far enough, but we cannot delay action. If our actions prevent even one family from experiencing the tragedy of losing a loved one to this dangerous substance, this measure will be worth it.

The reality is that kratom has not been demonstrated to be safe in any form. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any kratom products—whether as a drug, food additive, or supplement. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has warned of serious health risks associated with kratom, including tachycardia, anorexia, weight loss, liver toxicity, and hallucinations. Further, the Mayo Clinic has cautioned that the potency of kratom can vary widely from dose to dose, making it difficult for users to understand the risks they are taking.

During the public hearing, I was particularly moved by the testimony of two mothers who spoke courageously about losing their sons to complications stemming from natural kratom use. Their

stories underscore the uncertainty and danger surrounding this substance in all forms and reinforce my belief that allowing it to continue to be sold in our community poses unacceptable risks to our residents.

Communities across the state and nation are increasingly recognizing the public safety hazard posed by kratom. Just this past Tuesday, Rensselaer County enacted a full kratom ban with bipartisan support, the latest example demonstrating that this issue transcends political lines. Other counties, as well as neighboring states such as Vermont and Connecticut, have implemented or are pursuing full and complete bans.

While I am disappointed that my proposal for a full ban was not adopted by the Legislature in August, my administration will immediately begin work to enforce the synthetic kratom ban now in place. At the same time, I will continue to explore every available avenue to further protect our community from the dangers of all forms of kratom, including the possibility of returning to the Legislature for further action in the coming months.