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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 27, 2023

**STATEMENT FROM DA STEELE REGARDING INVESTIGATION
AND CONTAMINATED THC GUMMIES/EDIBLES**

On Friday, Feb. 24, 2023, I acted quickly to alert the public to the potential danger of contaminated Delta 8 THC gummies and edibles, which had already caused two Montgomery County adults to overdose after eating THC products that appeared to contain fentanyl. Initial testing on more than 100 products that were seized through search warrants was performed using an IONSCAN 600 instrument, used for drug detection throughout the United States. The IONSCAN 600 detects the presence of many types of illegal narcotics at very small amounts, calibrated to detect to the .01 nanogram threshold. The scans indicated the presence of one or more controlled substances, including fentanyl and heroin, showing up in a significant number, but not all, Delta 8 THC gummy and edible products.

At this point, I don't have any definitive answers, but what I do know is the public needs to be wary of these THC products that are produced in an unregulated industry and in varying settings. Rather than identifying specific brands of Delta 8 THC gummies and edibles, it is more important for the public to know it is "buyer beware" in the world of Delta 8 edibles. A toddler getting ahold of them and ingesting them or a teenager who eats a handful at once could be very dangerous, and we need the public to know that.

This investigation is not over, and testing and scanning is continuing on these products. Some of the products were tested in a lab over the weekend, and those products did not alert to any illegal drugs at the lab's threshold level of detection, meaning the levels identified using the IONSCAN 600 instrument were not detectible. We are continuing to investigate how a fentanyl overdose was caused by a THC product, although we don't have the package of original edibles that were consumed. There are many avenues we are investigating including the possibility of cross-contamination in the making and/or packaging of the THC edibles.

Finally, I would like to thank and commend the Tobacco Hut stores, which have been fully cooperative with law enforcement, as have other smoke shops in Montgomery County. Everyone who law enforcement has approached about this is very concerned and, like us, focused on keeping the public safe.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele