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Greetings, My name is Jordan Smith. I have been a cannabis user and advocate for over 25 years and a medical cannabis caregiver for 13 years. The smell and sight of cannabis is still vilified by many such as one of the sponsors of this bill Scott Cyrway who have spent their careers ostracizing and jailing individuals for choosing to use cannabis. A lot has changed since the days when he was the director of the DARE program which we now know caused more drug use than it ever prevented. He has called caregivers drug dealers in a public hearing and more recently in another hearing claimed that people who's use cannabis are more likely to abuse their pets which is entirely untrue and is fear mongering. Years ago this rhetoric would fit right into public opinion but today this is inflammatory and wildly inappropriate.

I understand it must be difficult for people who believed so strongly that this plant was such a threat to public safety that people needed to be jailed for even possessing a small amount of it to see it be legalized. This especially applies to the law enforcement and prosecutor community who have destroyed so many lives because of this belief. Admitting they were wrong in all of these actions and living with that guilt is harder than holding on to these antiquated beliefs and still fighting cannabis at every turn.

I felt it necessary to preface my statement with this because it is at the heart of this bill.

Maine is a hard working state with many smells both from Industry large and small, home businesses, hobbies, farms, barbecues, campfires, fishing boats, paper mills, gas stations, the list goes on and on. I recall living on a farm where the farmer who tended the fields for hay would spread chicken manure periodically to provide nutrients to the fields. It smelled terrible, like dead bodies. Our dogs would roll in it and then come in the house and make the house smell terrible. The entire town would smell like this for weeks as he would tend many fields all over town. This is a nuisance smell but its also part of living in Maine. And cannabis is now a part of living in Maine as well. Whether you enjoy the smell or not.

Some people do not like the smell of burning wood in campfires or in the wood stoves that people rely on to stay warm in the winter, some people don't like the smell of cooking meat in a barbecue or on a grill, some people don't like the smell of fish on the waterfront. Nobody likes the smell of paper mills or many other manufacturing facilities. A lot of people don't like the "visual nuisance" of many of these things either but they are all a part of this great states heritage, livelihood and identity.

Many "residential" areas are intermingled or at least within view or smelling distance of Industry and or home businesses that produce visual or olfactory "nuisances" so it's going to be very difficult to define what a residential area is in regards to a nuisance smell. As we all know smell travels easily throughout the air and does not adhere to zoning requirements. If we are going to ban the smell or appearance of cannabis because it is a nuisance than we need to ban everything that anyone feels is a nuisance to them. If you were to present 1000 people with the smell of rotting fish or cannabis 900 are going to prefer the cannabis the other 100 just dislike cannabis for whatever reason. If you were to show 1000 people a picture of a paper mill or a cannabis plant again people would generally rather see the cannabis plant.

Lastly it should be mentioned that outside of the medical and adult use cannabis program we also have a hemp program. There is far less regulation on where it can be grown, how much can be grown and zero regulation on how much it can smell. For that reason alone this bill is completely pointless since anyone could grow hemp anywhere and it will look and smell exactly the same as its psychoactive counterpart. This bill could pass and have zero impact on the "nuisance" of the smell and sight of cannabis.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read and consider my testimony on this matter.

My very best regards,
Jordan A Smith