



MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

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Statement in opposition to

L.D. 1952, An Act to Allow On-site Cannabis Consumption

January 24, 2024

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and the Acting President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in opposition to LD 1952.

The Mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

The emerging challenges to Maine law enforcement over the past several years in managing and processing impaired drivers is consuming in resources, while posing a detriment to public safety. Maine law enforcement is no longer tasked with addressing impaired drivers only between the hours of 10 pm - 2 am. Now this task encompasses all hours of the day. It is common to have impaired drivers during the morning hours when children are waiting for the school bus, or pedestrians are enjoying the benefits of the public roadways.

The legalization of Cannabis has contributed to this risk level of impairment with some people making poor decisions in operating a motor vehicle impaired to the slightest degree, and in most cases combining alcohol and Cannabis to enhance their impairment. One of the many challenges facing the police officer on the street is detecting impairment involving Cannabis if the substance consumed is an edible, or a high concentrate THC product, masked with a non-odor application. It is possible, and probably likely, that an individual stopped during a traffic stop for an infraction, could be impaired and released without detection if they consumed an edible or high concentrate Cannabis products. The onset of impairment for Cannabis vary depending on the type of product consumed. Edibles could be consumed at an on-site establishment, and the individual could become impaired while operating a vehicle 45-60 minutes after the consumption.

Operating under the influence of alcohol has a testing mechanism established and recognized by the courts across the country. All of Maine's law enforcement officers, approximately 2,300 police officers, are trained to recognize, process, and test an individual suspected of being under

the influence of alcohol. Less than 100 officers are specially trained as Drug Recognition Experts to conduct the same investigation required for criminal prosecution with individuals under the influence of Cannabis. An incident involving an impaired driver with Cannabis or narcotics generally requires two officers managing the incident instead of one. The strain on law enforcement in the field providing safe roads is real. Limited staff, time consuming processing, and stretched resources are some of the underlining concerns and reasons for not supporting this measure.

Similar to a bar serving alcohol, customers utilizing these Cannabis establishments will typically drive a motor vehicle to these locations. Allowing these to flourish around the state will create yet another challenge for the safety of the motoring public and law enforcement.

On behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we thank the Committee for its consideration of this proposal, and we respectfully ask members to vote ought not to pass on LD 1952.