

## **Testimony In Opposition to L.D. 40**

An Act to Protect Liberty and Advance Justice in the Implementation, Administration and Enforcement of the Cannabis Legalization Act and To Implement Certain Recommendations of the Subcommittee on Non-substantive Changes to the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs*

*March 4, 2024*

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Mark Gallagher. I am a Senior Consultant and Shareholder at Drummond Woodsum Strategic Consulting located in Portland. I am here today on behalf of the trade group CannabisME, which consists of operators in the adult use cannabis industry, to speak in opposition to L.D. 40 and propose an alternative approach for making certain changes to Maine's adult use cannabis laws.

The key concern I want to express is that while this bill is being advertised as having unanimous industry support, that is not the case. Many licensees were not invited to contribute and have not had an opportunity to meaningfully participate in this process for what would be a complete overhaul of the adult use cannabis program. The sponsor's amendment was circulated with limited notice for a public hearing at the tail end of a short legislative session. The 66-page bill, which remained a concept draft until last week, proposes sweeping changes to Maine's adult use cannabis program and will have a direct impact on the public, not just licensees. In addition to concerns about the substance of much of the bill (e.g., effectively eliminating seed to sale tracking and undermining the integrity of mandatory testing), we have identified operational concerns with the bill (e.g., removing the requirement that OCP approve changes in ownership without changing restrictions in owning three or more cultivation licenses or a cannabis testing lab and another cannabis establishment) and portions of the bill that appear to be pulled from other laws that do not make sense in the context of cannabis regulation and do not appear to serve a legitimate policy purpose (e.g., making the only prohibition on the shape of adult use edible products being shapes appealing to a prurient interest). There is not enough time to work through all of the potential short and long term impacts that could occur if the bill passes as amended.

Based on the foregoing, CannabisME would like to see an alternative to the sponsor's amendment, which would include putting together a working group that consists of licensees in the adult use cannabis program, regulators, public health agencies, municipalities, and consumers to study and make recommendations to the 132<sup>nd</sup> VLA Committee regarding changes to the adult use cannabis laws. This will ensure that stakeholders can adequately participate in this important process and will result in smart policymaking.

Thank you in advance for taking these comments into consideration.