

Leo Paquette
Firefly Organics/Cannabis Guild of Maine
LD 584

Good Morning, Esteemed members of the VLA committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony as I regretfully can't be there in person. I am writing to you today to express my strong support for LD584. I have been a licensed cannabis operator since 2011. We currently employ 34 people across 3 companies including retail, manufacturing, and cultivation.

The cannabis industry in Maine has grown significantly in recent years, and with this growth comes and increased need for strong leadership, transparency, and accountability within the Office of Cannabis Policy. By making the Director of this office an appointed position, subject to legislative confirmation, Operators AND consumers can ensure that the individual selected for this critical role has the qualifications, experience, and public trust necessary to effectively manage the state's cannabis program.

There are several key reasons why I believe LD 584 is essential:

- 1.) Increased Accountability: Making the Director of OCP subject to confirmation by the legislature will ensure that the individual holding this position is accountable not only to the Governor but also to the people of Maine through their elected representatives. This process will foster greater transparency in the election process and ensure that the Director remains responsive to the needs of all stakeholders in the cannabis industry, including businesses, consumers, and local communities.
- 2.) Public Trust and Confidence: The cannabis industry is still relatively new in Maine, and I have concerns about the regulatory framework and how the industry is being managed. We should have a Director who supports our growing industry and all I have seen from our current Director is questionable actions at best. By subjecting the Directors appointment to legislative confirmation, Maines citizens can have more confidence that the Director is not only qualified but also has the support of the legislative body that represents us. This process will help instill trust in the regulatory process and in the policies governing cannabis.
- 3.) Expert Leadership: The cannabis industry is complex, and its regulations are constantly evolving. By ensuring that the Director is appointed through a formal process, the legislature can evaluate the qualifications and track record of the candidate. This ensures that the Director is equipped with the knowledge and experience necessary to oversee the states cannabis program effectively and adapt to the changing landscape of the industry.
- 4.) Checks and Balances: One of the fundamental principles of our democracy is the system of checks and balances. The confirmation process provides an additional layer of oversight and helps prevent the concentration of power in the hands of single individual or a single branch of government. It ensures that the Director is accountable to both the executive and legislative branches and ultimately, to the people of Maine.

In conclusion, LD 584 represents an important step toward ensuring that Maines cannabis program is managed with transparency, accountability, and expertise. By making the Director of OCP an appointed position subject to confirmation, we can create a more balanced, effective, and trusted regulatory system. I strongly urge you to support this important piece of legislation and look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on Maines cannabis industry and the citizens it serves.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at any time.

Sincerely,
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