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Testimony in Opposition to LD 1535

("An Act to Reduce Illegal Cannabis Operations by Requiring Permits for High Electrical Usage")

J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®

April 22, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations. We represent the Maine Association of REALTORS®, a professional trade association established in 1936 with over 6,500 members statewide. REALTORS® protect private property rights, build Maine communities, and grow our state's economy. Our members represent buyers and sellers involved in both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our membership also includes industry affiliates, such as lenders, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is chartered by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the largest trade association in the country.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® is opposed to LD 1535. If passed, the bill would require a special permit for electrical installations exceeding 300-amp service and utility reporting of high energy use. As our state moves to become fossil fuel free, this bill is in direct opposition to the state's energy goals and jeopardizes the fundamental right of private property use.

While we acknowledge concerns around Maine's illegal cannabis operations, LD 1535 would have a much broader impact to law-abiding private property owners beyond targeting illegal cannabis operations. Requiring an additional permit for higher amp electrical service, will add to electrical costs, delay requests for electrical improvements, and impact properties that need additional amperage for a multitude of lawful reasons that extend beyond cannabis growing.

Increasing the cost and time of establishing or upgrading electrical service would also impact Maine's climate change goals and deter some property owners from making the switch to greener more energy efficient options to power and heat their homes. It is not uncommon for electrical service over 300 amps to be required of many properties— particularly homes served by geothermal and air-source heat pumps, or shops operating at private residences such as welding, or private docks with power supply, or homes with EV chargers, to name a few. As the state continues to push for improvements to energy sources, this bill as mentioned, is in direct conflict with that goal.

MAR urges policies that respect the concept that private property ownership is made up of a bundle of rights, which includes use. We support development and voluntary use of alternative energy sources to reduce dependence on non-renewable forms of energy, and the best way to encourage that is through incentives and not additional regulations.

We encourage careful consideration when increasing regulations that add to the cost of energy upgrades as an avenue of deterring criminal activity. Expenses and delays that may be caused by



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additional permit requirements will impact private property owners far beyond the goal of combating illegal cannabis operations.

Please consider these concerns during your deliberation of LD 1535 and vote Ought Not to Pass.
Thank you for your time and consideration.