



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

LD 1535 - An Act to Reduce Illegal Cannabis Operations by Requiring Permits for High Electrical Usage

April 24, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 1535 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

While municipal officials appreciate the intent to get a handle on the illegal cannabis grows that have been a increasing problem in Maine, they don't believe that this would be an effective avenue to take. As written, LD 1535 would shift the permitting authority to include municipalities with an electrical inspector, in addition to the current authority held by the state electrical inspector. Not all municipalities have an electrical inspector on staff and our members don't believe this change would have the intended outcome of curbing illegal cannabis grows.

Being on the front lines of their communities, municipal officials in all positions tend to learn the location of these properties but have no authority to intervene. At first glance, LPC members were encouraged to see a proposal aimed at helping communities with these challenging properties, but quickly questions came up around what would happen next. From current experience, once the properties have been identified, municipalities would face the cost of enforcement, where in some cases law enforcement has declined to interfere. In another vein, this bill could implicate innocent residents who want to upgrade their electric service for legal, non-cannabis related business activities.

Municipalities acknowledge that these properties have effects that bleed into almost every sector—law enforcement complications, health and safety provisions, and energy management, to name a few—but do not see LD 1535 as feasible path forward. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.

