

Testimony In Opposition to:

L.D. 1897

An Act Regarding Sun-grown Cultivation in the Cannabis Industry

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

May 5, 2025

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

My name is Kristina Grimaldi. I am an attorney with Dentons and am here on behalf of Cannabis Association of Maine to speak in opposition to L.D. 1897.

We respectfully oppose L.D. 1897 because it rolls back key safeguards in the medical program and further widens the gap between medical and adult use cannabis regulation, undermining coherence, accountability, and trust in Maine's cannabis framework.

Expanded Plant Counts and Canopy Without Corresponding Oversight

This bill increases the allowable plant count and canopy size for sun-grown medical caregivers. While outdoor cultivation has a valuable role in sustainable cannabis production, this significant expansion raises serious concerns:

- There is no corresponding increase in inspection, compliance, or tracking requirements, creating opportunities for diversion and unregulated sales;
- It exacerbates the regulatory disparity between the medical and adult use programs, placing licensed adult use cultivators, who face strict inventory tracking and production limits, at a competitive disadvantage;
- It risks further eroding confidence in the legitimacy of the medical program, which has increasingly become a parallel, less-regulated commercial system.

We are not opposed to supporting outdoor cultivation, but it must come with clear rules, inspections, and consistency with broader policy goals.

30-day Grace Period for Cannabis Workers Without Background Checks or Card Approval

The bill also allows new employees or contractors to work for 30 days while awaiting their individual identification card. While we understand the desire for efficiency in hiring, this provision undermines basic vetting procedures:

- It exposes licensed businesses to compliance risk by allowing unvetted individuals to handle cannabis;
- It creates unnecessary liability, especially if applicants are later denied based on disqualifying background issues;
- It reduces the integrity of a licensing system designed to protect public safety, product integrity, and workplace standards.

- Background checks and proper identification are not red tape—they are essential for consumer and community protection.

Repealing Yeast and Mold Testing Endangers Public Health

Perhaps the most concerning provision in L.D. 1897 is the repeal of mandatory yeast and mold testing for adult use cannabis. This rollback:

- Removes a critical safeguard against contaminants that can cause serious health problems, especially for immunocompromised consumers;
- Contradicts the direction of other states, which are enhancing—not weakening—product safety testing;
- Sends the wrong message about Maine’s commitment to consumer health and responsible regulation.

Testing for yeast and mold is not excessive; it is standard practice in cannabis programs across the country. There maybe alternatives to this, such as speciation testing, which only tests for harmful yeasts and molds, but do not support eliminating this testing standard entirely.

A Step Away from Consistency and Consumer Confidence

L.D. 1897 adds to the fragmentation between the medical and adult use programs. Rather than creating a streamlined, fair, and unified regulatory system, this bill moves Maine in the opposite direction toward more confusion, inconsistent standards, and weakened oversight.

We believe in a cannabis industry that works for patients, consumers, businesses, and regulators alike. That means aligning safety, accountability, and public trust across both programs and not unraveling hard-earned protections.

We respectfully urge the Committee to reject L.D. 1897 and instead focus on policies that support reasonable regulations and long-term industry sustainability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.