

Duncan Markovich
Better Ways LLC
LD 104

Good afternoon Chairs Hickman and Supica and to the esteemed members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

My name is Duncan Markovich, owner and founder of Better Ways, a cannabis therapeutics, education, and community center in my hometown of Branford, CT. I have been around and working with this plant for over 20 years.

I am a proud activist for this plant through the Connecticut CannaWarrior's group and I have had the privilege of speaking and testifying in multiple states now.

There are many bills up for discussion today but I would like to emphasize my complete opposition for LD 104 and 1847 and my support for the remaining LDs 1488, 1567, 1620, 1672, 1820, 1840, and 1897.

Let's get right to the main elephants in the room, the first being track and trace programs for cannabis products, the second testing standards, safety levels, and the science to support such concerns. Both can be viewed as gate keeping in this industry and the actual science behind this plant must support and drive public policy.

What is truly needed in the evolving cannabis industry is pragmatic legislation that supports realistic regulation and oversight, not overregulation and an appearance of oversight. Requiring these mechanisms versus making them voluntary as mentioned in LD 1672 will have many adverse effects as seen in other states as well.

The "need" for any track and trace program for cannabis isn't necessary, we don't track and trace our hops into the individual can of beer they go into so all of this nonsense about chain of custody for a plant and plant-based medicine is redundant. Cannabis is an agricultural crop and must be treated and regulated as such as is already well accomplished in many of Maine's open markets for any other farmer or produce type.

The requirement of such a program and or the inclusion of a compromised national track and trace program such as METRC will absolutely have significant negative impacts to Maine's cannabis program, its operators, your culture and ultimately the patients and the very community that is supposed to be served and respected.

Right now, Maine is a beacon of hope for the cannabis industry especially on the east coast, so I implore you all not to fall to the manipulation and false allure of mega-corporations that more often or not do much more damage than good in this industry.

After all the recent controversy of conflicts of interest between MERTC, Director Hudak of OCP, as well as METRC's exposed diversion fraud through recent whistleblower and ex METRC executive Marcus Estes, I am very surprised that track and trace is even a serious legislative consideration.

When it comes to safety and testing standards, we are ultimately forced into the balancing act of large, corporately funded cultivation sites that have many botanical and quality issues versus small scale cultivation sites owned and run by small business operators that make up the real and actual backbone of any state's cannabis industry.

I highly suggest looking into Tess Eidem's work from Colorado, she is a leading PhD Microbiologist and conducts Aerobiological Research specifically for Cannabis Quality and Safety. Much of her research underscores the technical complexities of indoor cannabis cultivation.

The existence of LD 1567 and the requirement for remediation labeling illustrates this very dilemma. Implementing expensive and scientifically unfounded testing standards will cause many of the best small-scale operators to be forced out of operation. Many of these concerns and issues may be remedied with the expansion of outdoor cultivation as supported in LD 1897.

Anyone using cannabis should absolutely know whether or not that remediation was required in order for their product to make it to the shelves. The requirement for such a warning raises more serious questions like why are we allowing growing practices that lead to the need for remediation, no cannabis that needs to be remediated should ever be available on shelves. This is a major slap in the face to the plant and the patients it serves.

Every cultivator and manufacturer should make it a goal and point of pride to never have to use remediation. True medicinal grade cannabis never needs to be remediated and once this plant undergoes any these processes, the terpene and cannabinoid efficacy is compromised to a degree that the medicinal properties on the plant material is significantly impacted. In my opinion, remediated cannabis means you don't know what you are doing in this industry and you are a liability to the progression of this plant and industry.

As always, I welcome any questions or comments from this committee and I continue to echo the sentiment to FREE THE PLANT AND FREE THE PEOPLE.

Respectfully,

Duncan Markovich – Branford, CT

Owner and Founder - Better Ways LLC, A Cannabis Education and Community Center

CT Cannawarriors, CT Shoreline Chamber of Commerce Member

Multistate Cannabis Activist and Speaker