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Dear Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the proposed legislation to authorize municipalities and local governments within unorganized areas to license and regulate cannabis hospitality lounges. This bill represents a pragmatic and forward-thinking step toward normalizing cannabis use in a safe, controlled, and community-based setting.

Support for Patients and Renters Without Private Spaces:

This legislation directly addresses a growing gap in access for many legal cannabis consumers—particularly medical patients and renters—who may not have a private residence where they can legally consume their cannabis products. Many Mainers live in apartment buildings or public housing that prohibit smoking or cannabis use entirely, leaving them without a safe or legal place to medicate. Cannabis hospitality lounges provide a designated, legal space for responsible consumption, especially benefiting those who rely on cannabis for chronic conditions like PTSD, pain, or anxiety.

Boosting Local Economies and Tourism

Cannabis hospitality lounges would also offer a meaningful boost to local economies. By giving municipalities the authority to regulate and benefit from these businesses, local governments can create jobs, generate licensing revenue, and attract new visitors—especially cannabis tourists, who already contribute significantly to states like Colorado and Nevada where similar models have succeeded. These lounges can partner with nearby cannabis retailers, food vendors, and entertainment venues, fostering a new segment of the local hospitality industry while encouraging compliance with responsible use guidelines.

Encouraging Safer, Regulated Use

Providing a designated space for consumption not only promotes public safety by discouraging use in inappropriate or unregulated environments, but also helps reduce the stigma around cannabis by treating it similarly to alcohol in social settings. Just as bars exist for adults to responsibly consume alcohol, cannabis lounges give communities a tool to foster safe, respectful, and legal cannabis consumption.

A Local-Controlled, Low-Burden Approach

Importantly, this bill allows for full local control. It empowers municipalities to decide whether to allow these lounges and how to regulate them, without adding additional state bureaucracy or oversight. This flexible framework ensures that local governments—not distant or sometimes out of touch state agencies—can tailor rules to fit the character and needs of their communities.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to vote in favor of this bill. It is a common-sense, economically beneficial, and socially responsible solution that supports both cannabis patients and adult consumers across Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.