



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association
Neither For Nor Against

*LD 1609 - An Act to Prevent the Participation of Individuals and Companies Linked to Federally
Recognized Criminal Organizations in the Medical and Adult Use Cannabis Programs*
May 8, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony neither for nor against LD 1609 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 MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

While it is recognized and respected that the intent behind this bill is to keep bad actors out of Maine's regulated cannabis industry, municipal officials believe the legislation as written raises several significant questions that must be addressed for it to be effective, enforceable, and fair.

The phrase "any person associated with organized crime" is vague and open to interpretation. From a municipal perspective, enforcement hinges on clear, legally defined terms and question what qualifies as a criminal organization? Is this based on a formal criminal charge, a law enforcement report, or intelligence not subject to public scrutiny?

Without clear statutory definitions or thresholds this provision is subjective. Municipalities need assurances that enforcement decisions are evidence-based and legally defensible, not based on rumor, innuendo, or suspicion.

Local leaders also question how individuals would be identified as being "associated" with such organizations. Will there be a transparent process? Could applicants respond to allegations or challenge the basis of a denial? In local government experience, licensing denials lacking procedural safeguards can lead to costly legal disputes and loss of public trust—especially when accusations are serious but unproven.

It is critical that any law of this nature includes due process protections, clearly defines the evidentiary standard, and provides guidance to both state and local officials about how determinations are to be made.

While the intent to protect the cannabis licensing process from infiltration by criminality is a laudable goal, and one appreciated by municipalities who agree that integrity and public safety are essential to a functioning legal market, municipal officials would also caution the committee to carefully review how this bill is structured, would be implemented, and enforced.

Thank you for your time and considering the municipal perspective on this issue.

