



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association
In Opposition To

LD 1669 - An Act to Establish the Cannabis Advisory Council
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 in opposition to LD 1669 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.

Municipal officials strongly oppose the creation of a Cannabis Advisory Council as currently proposed in this bill. While they support collaborative efforts to improve the cannabis regulatory framework, this proposal is viewed by the LPC as deeply flawed in both structure and intent.

The proposed makeup of the Council appears unbalanced, overly influenced by industry interests, and significantly lacking in representation from the key public-sector partners responsible for implementation, enforcement, and public safety.

Despite the bill's stated goal to review how to best work with state agencies and municipalities to improve and maintain the quality of the cannabis program, the proposed Council includes only one municipal representative and no other agencies. This is an unacceptable underrepresentation given that municipalities bear the bulk of regulatory, zoning, enforcement, and community impact responsibilities related to cannabis businesses.

Local governments must navigate neighborhood concerns, oversee licensing compliance, respond to illicit activity, and ensure land use compatibility, and they do this with limited staff and no dedicated resources. To include only one local government voice on a statewide advisory body is not just tokenistic, it's dismissive of the realities municipalities face.

While industry representation and input from regulated entities is vitally important, this composition creates the appearance of a state-sanctioned industry advocacy group, not a balanced public advisory council. Allowing a majority of seats to be filled by individuals with direct financial interests in the cannabis industry raises serious concerns about regulatory capture, conflicts of interest, and would undermine impartial policy development.

Local leaders would like to kindly point out the critical regulatory voices left out of this council, such as public health, code enforcement, environmental protection, taxation, or workplace safety. These are the partners who provide essential oversight and routinely identify system gaps, compliance risks, and enforcement challenges.





**MAINE MUNICIPAL
ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936**

60 Community Drive | Augusta, ME 04330-9486

1-800-452-8786 (in state)

(T) 207-623-8428

(F) 207-624-0129

If the committee wishes to move forward with LD 1669, municipal officials strongly suggest including additional voices to the proposed council, particularly from law enforcement. Given the state's ongoing efforts to dismantle illegal grow operations and combat diversion and trafficking, excluding law enforcement from this conversation is not only shortsighted, but is also dangerous. If we want a well-regulated industry, we must include those with real-time knowledge of illegal market dynamics and enforcement challenges.

To be clear, municipal officials support efforts to improve the cannabis programs in Maine, they also oppose any proposals that is not a truly balanced approach. An effective advisory body must reflect the full spectrum of stakeholders, that would include at least two or more municipal representatives (urban and rural), law enforcement representation (such as a police chief or sheriff), regulatory experts from relevant state agencies, public health and community safety stakeholders, and a fair, but limited, number of industry participants.

Without these perspectives, any recommendations made by this body will lack credibility and be viewed, rightly so, as industry driven. Thank you for your time and considering the municipal perspective.



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