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The Honorable Senator Craig Hickman
Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
132nd Maine Legislature
24 Wingate Street
Augusta, ME 04330

Re: Support for LD 1897, "An Act Regarding Sun-grown Cultivation in the Medical Use and Adult Use Cannabis Industries"

Dear Senator Chair Hickman and Representative Chair Supica,

I write in strong support of LD 1897, which thoughtfully updates Maine's medical-use and adult-use cannabis statutes to recognize and promote "sun-grown" cultivation. By carving out a distinct category for sun-grown cultivators, adjusting plant-count and canopy limits, tailoring fee structures, and eliminating outdated testing mandates, this bill advances sustainability, equity, and patient access across our state's cannabis industry.

1. Encouraging Sustainable, Low-Energy Cultivation

LD 1897 defines "sun-grown cultivation" as using sunlight as the primary light source with minimal electrical input (100 A or less per 1,500 sq ft). This recognition incentivizes outdoor and greenhouse operations that dramatically reduce the carbon footprint and energy costs associated with indoor grows. As Maine strives to meet its climate goals, supporting sun-grown cultivators helps cut greenhouse-gas emissions, lower electricity demand, and foster environmentally responsible agriculture.

2. Expanding Capacity for Medical Caregivers

By allowing sun-grown medical caregivers to cultivate up to 150 mature plants (or 2,500 sq ft canopy) annually, versus the standard 30-plant limit, LD 1897 ensures that patients with higher needs (such as those requiring tinctures, edibles, or concentrated extracts) can maintain reliable access to medicine. The tiered fee structure (capped at \$240 per 30-plant group or \$1,500 per 2,500 sq ft canopy) balances revenue generation for the state with affordability for small-scale, sun-grown operators.

3. Streamlining Regulations and Reducing Administrative Burdens

This bill repeals the blanket yeast-and-mold testing requirement for adult-use products—an

outdated mandate that added cost and complexity without clear safety benefit—and restores regulatory focus to risk-based testing protocols. Moreover, the 30-day grace period for caregiver assistants and adult-use support staff modernizes workforce onboarding, ensuring continuity of operations while background checks are pending.

4. Promoting Equity and Market Diversity

By differentiating indoor and sun-grown license tiers, LD 1897 levels the playing field for rural and community-based cultivators who may lack capital for expensive indoor facilities but possess ample land and expertise in outdoor agriculture. This inclusivity fosters a more diverse industry, spreads economic opportunity across Maine, and helps prevent market consolidation by large, energy-intensive operators.

5. Strengthening Security and Compliance

The bill's updated security provisions for outdoor cultivation—such as gating, signage, and separate cultivation-area requirements—align with existing medical-use safeguards while accommodating the unique realities of sun-grown operations. These measures maintain product integrity and prevent diversion without imposing unnecessary indoor-style requirements on outdoor sites.

Conclusion

LD 1897 represents a balanced, forward-looking approach to cannabis policy that advances environmental sustainability, expands patient access, fosters equity, and streamlines regulatory oversight. I urge the Committee to vote “Ought to Pass” and send this important legislation to the full Legislature.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to crafting commonsense cannabis policy in Maine. I would be pleased to answer any questions or provide further information as you consider LD 1897.

Respectfully,

Matthew Gilbert

Matthew Gilbert
Burnham
LD 1897

Please see the attached PDF detailing my support for LD1897