

Testimony of Nate Cloutier

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
May 15, 2025

In Support of LD 1920, “*An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Potentially Intoxicating Hemp Products to a Person Under 21 Years of Age*”

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Nate Cloutier. I am here today on behalf of HospitalityMaine, representing Maine’s first-rate restaurant and lodging industries. HospitalityMaine supports LD 1920, “*An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Potentially Intoxicating Hemp Products to a Person Under 21 Years of Age.*”

LD 1920 would ensure that certain hemp-derived products can only be sold to those age 21 and over. It also includes safeguards such as requiring child-resistant and tamper-evident packaging and ensures product labeling complies with federal trademark laws.

We appreciate Representative Strout for bringing this bill forward.

If the committee is inclined to take any action on this issue, the top priority should be to restrict the sale of these products to individuals 21 and older. This is the most immediate and appropriate step the legislature can take to ensure these products are used responsibly and safely.

In recent weeks, I’ve been reaching out to restaurant members across the state to get a clearer picture of how these beverages are being used in practice and how they’re viewed by both operators and customers. It’s clear they’ve become a part of the evolving food and beverage landscape, especially in establishments looking for innovative ways to meet customer demand.

What stands out is how thoughtful and responsible restaurant operators have been. For example, I’ve heard some businesses are limiting sales to one beverage per customer and choosing not to serve them alongside alcohol. They’re filling the gaps where regulation doesn’t yet exist, and they’re hearing from customers who genuinely enjoy these products as part of their dining experience.

We understand this won’t be the right fit for every restaurant. But for some, it’s a welcome opportunity. In an industry with average margins of 2-5%, being able to offer a unique product that aligns with customer interest is a meaningful way to increase traffic and support the bottom line.

Given that the product is here, and customers are seeking it out, one sensible change we should all agree on is requiring these products not be available to individuals under 21 years old.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to support LD 1920. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.