Andrew Kaplan
Belgrade
LD 1920

Distinguished members of the committee. I am Andrew Kaplan of Belgrade and I'm here to testify in support of LD 1920, an act to limit access to intoxicating hemp products to people 21+. I am the owner of Freedom's Edge cider and a hemp thc beverage called Dr Lovejoy's Maine Made Elixirs.

Last year this committee considered bill 1996, to essentially eliminate the sale of these beverages. That bill was voted ought not to pass, but in consideration of the committee's concerns around the sale of the beverages, the DACF convened a working group of hemp industry leaders, public health professionals and government regulators to consider rules that would protect the public while continuing to allow the beverages to be available to the public.

I'm here today to ask that these recommendations, submitted to the DACF by Craig Lapine on behalf of the working group, be added to this bill.

Of the four recommendations, the most important is the 21+ age gating. Beyond just making this the law, the committee should add provisions for enforcement by a specific agency, and provide resources to allow enough inspectors so that the retailers can be held accountable for any failure to uphold the age restriction policy. Other states have raised this revenue through an excise tax, similar to what we do for beer and hard cider, and I think that would be a reasonable approach here.

The second recommendation I want to highlight is the 5mg THC cap proposed by the working group for these beverages. 5mg is important because these beverages are sold in beverage and convenience stores, often to people who are not regular cannabis users. For these people, a 5mg dose has an effect very similar to that of a single beer or hard cider. It will prevent these users from becoming unintentionally impaired and make for a safer, better experience. Regular cannabis users will find 5mg insufficient, but those users are already well served by the higher potency products available at dispensaries.

Thank you for your time.