

Eben Sumner
West Baldwin
LD 1920

Public Testimony on LD 1920

Eben Sumner

Chairpersons and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eben Sumner, and I'm a resident of West Baldwin, Maine. I'm writing today in support of LD 1920 and to respectfully offer my perspective and expertise on this important issue.

I serve on the boards of the Maine Craft Cannabis Association and the Biddeford/Saco Chamber of Commerce. I'm also a member of Seed2Health and the National Industrial Hemp Council. Over the past five years, I've worked closely with the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee and the Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP), attending numerous meetings with both past and present leadership and staff.

Most relevant to LD 1920, I am the founder and operator of Casco Bay Hemp, a Maine-based cannabinoid manufacturing company established in 2018. We formulate and produce finished consumer products and medicines for distribution in the U.S., Europe, South America, and other emerging markets. Our work includes direct collaboration with Government Health Agencies worldwide that regulate the importation of cannabinoid medicines, as well as prescribing physicians, which gives me a unique insight into how different governments regulate cannabinoids across both medical and consumer markets.

As a United States delegate with the National Industrial Hemp Council—a federally funded organization—I've traveled globally to speak on cannabinoid regulation, trade policy, and the use of industrial hemp for grain, fiber, seed, and phytoremediation.

LD 1920 addresses a regulatory gap that has grown increasingly complex due to the absence of federal guidance. At the core of the issue is the need to distinguish between intoxicating and non-intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids. This bill creates that distinction. It responsibly places age restrictions and proper oversight on psychoactive compounds—aligning them with adult-use cannabis—while leaving non-intoxicating cannabinoids outside of that structure, where they more appropriately belong.

This is not only a common-sense regulatory approach, but one that has been thoughtfully developed by a working group convened by DACF in the last legislative session. That group—made up of Maine-based stakeholders, OCP representatives, and other agencies—delivered clear recommendations that are now reflected in LD 1920. That collaborative process deserves recognition and respect.

It is therefore deeply concerning to see a last-minute bill from the Governor's Office, introduced shortly before this hearing, that proposes moving hemp oversight under OCP—a reversal of what I had previously been told by Director Hudak, who had indicated that OCP did not intend to assume hemp regulatory responsibilities.

I urge this Committee to consider the broader context. Over the past several years, Maine's cannabis stakeholders have voiced concerns about regulatory overreach, burdensome implementation, and a lack of consistent communication. Attempting to bring hemp under the OCP's authority at the eleventh hour, outside the stakeholder process and without transparent dialogue, risks repeating those same mistakes.

LD 1920 offers a clear, practical, and fair solution. It upholds consumer safety, supports Maine farmers and small businesses, and respects the work already done by this Legislature and the communities you represent.

Thank you for your diligence, time, and for your thoughtful consideration. I'm happy to serve as a resource and welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully,
Eben Sumner
Founder & CEO, Casco Bay Hemp