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May 15, 2025

Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Chair
Representative William Pluecker, Chair
Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1920, An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Potentially Intoxicating Hemp Products to a Person Under 21 Years of Age (Emergency)

Dear Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

The Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association and the Retail Association of Maine are providing joint testimony in support of LD 1920, An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Potentially Intoxicating Hemp Products to a Person Under 21 Years of Age (Emergency). Our business trade associations represent Main Street businesses including independently owned and operated grocery stores and supermarkets, general merchandise and specialty retailers, convenience stores, distributors, food and beverage manufacturers, and supporting partners — together representing more than 450 members statewide. Maine's retail sector employs more than 85,000 Mainers.

This written testimony is to supplement the oral testimony presented at the public hearing today.

We are writing to express support for LD 1920, which aims to prohibit the sale of potentially intoxicating hemp products to individuals under 21 years of age and to establish critical packaging requirements for these products. We also want to be clear that our focus is on hemp derived beverages. Main stream retailers are not interested in selling other hemp derived products like edibles.

Currently, many retailers in Maine voluntarily implement age-gating measures to prevent the sale of intoxicating hemp products to minors. However, without a uniform legal requirement, these voluntary measures can lead to inconsistencies and gaps in enforcement. By setting a statewide minimum age of 21 for the purchase of potentially intoxicating hemp products, LD 1920 will:

- **Protect Youth Health:** Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of intoxicating substances. Establishing a legal age limit helps safeguard their health and development.
- **Provide Clear Guidelines:** A uniform age restriction simplifies compliance for retailers and ensures consistent enforcement across the state.

- **Align with Other Substance Regulations:** This measure brings hemp products in line with existing age restrictions for alcohol and tobacco, promoting a coherent public health policy.

Section 5 of LD 1920 addresses the need for child-resistant and tamper-evident packaging for potentially intoxicating hemp products. This is a crucial step in preventing accidental ingestion by children and ensuring product integrity. However, it's important to consider the practical implications of these requirements:

- **Current Packaging Practices:** Many hemp-infused beverages are packaged in standard aluminum cans, similar to those used for soft drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages. These cans are familiar to consumers and are compatible with existing manufacturing and recycling systems.
- **Balancing Safety and Practicality:** While child-resistant and tamper-evident features are essential, it's important that the regulations allow for flexibility in how these features are implemented. For instance, overwraps or secondary packaging could provide the necessary safety features without requiring a complete overhaul of current packaging methods.
- **Avoiding Unintended Consequences:** Mandating entirely new packaging formats could impose significant costs on producers, potentially limiting product availability and consumer choice. It's vital that the regulations achieve safety objectives without placing undue burdens on businesses.

Here is what one of these Maine-made products looks like, and you can see the information currently on the label:





The Good Life Market's Post



The Good Life Market

April 11 · 🌐

The newest intro to the 21+ beverage line in Maine, these Delta 9 beverages offer an alternate way to chill. With 5 mg of hemp derived THC, these delicious drinks have no alcohol, are low in calories, but high in vibes. We have several great Maine-made options in stock: Mystic Cove, Hop the Wave, and Long Coast!

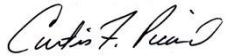


LD 1920 represents a thoughtful approach to regulating potentially intoxicating hemp products by:

- Establishing a clear legal age limit to protect minors.
- Implementing packaging requirements that enhance safety while considering practical manufacturing and environmental concerns.

I urge the committee to support LD 1920 and to consider provisions that allow for practical implementation of packaging requirements, ensuring both consumer safety and industry viability.

Thank you for your consideration, and we are happy to answer any questions.



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