

January 23, 2024

Matt Bayliss, Testimony in Support of LD 1952: An Act to Support On-Site Cannabis Consumption

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and distinguished members of the joint standing committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs my name is Matthew Bayliss, I'm a resident of Cumberland and I'm before you today as a member of the Cannabis Guild of Maine to testify in support of LD 1952, An Act to Support On-Site Cannabis Consumption.

The Cannabis Guild of Maine is an organization of responsible cannabis-related business owners who are committed to the long-term success of the industry. Our membership is comprised of retail store operators, cultivators, and product manufacturers in both the adult use and medical market. Our mission is to advocate for a sustainable regulatory framework for Maine's largest agricultural industry.

I believe that public health and safety is paramount to a successful cannabis industry, onsite consumption allows for a safe and controlled social setting for individuals to consume cannabis. By providing a designated space for consumption we can reduce the likelihood of public consumption and impaired driving. Implementing a program similar to Colorado's Cannabis Hospitality training would insure that employee's would have the tools available to address the unique challenges posed by on site cannabis consumption.

Maine's adult use cannabis industry is heavily dependent upon our tourist industry and unfortunately Maine does not have anywhere for them to consume cannabis legally. Cannabis consumption is not allowed in hotels, public spaces, boats, short term rentals, etc. Open source data provided by the Office of Cannabis Policy illustrates the bell curve of adult use cannabis retail sales over the course of 2023 clearly showing the positive impact of summer tourism on our industry. If someone is traveling to Maine, supporting our cannabis businesses and paying the state sales tax on their purchase they should be provided the opportunity to consume in a safe and welcoming space.

Lastly, our industry is suffering, due to over saturation, over regulation and an effective tax rate in excess of 60%. Maine needs to act proactively to protect our fastest growing industry and number one cash crop. Creating a regulatory framework for on-site consumption will strengthen and destigmatize our industry, while fostering parity between the allowable public consumption of cannabis and alcoholic beverages.