



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF CANNABIS POLICY
162 STATE HOUSE STATION
19 UNION STREET
FIRST FLOOR
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0162

ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES

KIRSTEN LC FIGUEROA
COMMISSIONER

OFFICE OF CANNABIS POLICY

JOHN HUDAK
DIRECTOR

January 31, 2024

Re: LD 1996, *An Act to Regulate Synthetic Hemp-derived Cannabinoids*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

We are writing today to express our strong support for a working group to study and develop recommendations regarding the regulation of hemp-derived products. As you will hear from others, the proliferation of unregulated, intoxicating products that contain cannabinoids derived or synthesized from hemp is first and foremost a matter of public health and safety; and it also poses a real economic threat to the health of Maine's regulated cannabis economy. These challenges are not unique to Maine: In the wake of the 2018 Farm Bill states across the country have grappled with the appropriate regulation intoxicating cannabinoids derived from an agricultural commodity that was historically used for fiber production. Public health and public safety officials, along with agricultural and cannabis regulators in states across the country are coming together to develop a regulatory framework that keeps hemp-derived intoxicating cannabinoids out of the hands of children while allowing hemp entrepreneurs to develop new products from the plant.

This bill would allow Maine regulators to do the same, while implementing a temporary moratorium on the sale of edible products containing intoxicating, hemp-derived cannabinoids in the State. The hemp industry, like the medical and adult use cannabis industries, is rapidly evolving and we owe it to Maine parents, children and consumers to appropriately regulate the new products manufactured in that industry. We are supportive of a moratorium on the sale of hemp-derived and synthesized intoxicating cannabinoid products, and we believe our colleagues at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry are best suited to engage in any rulemaking necessary to implement such a moratorium. Furthermore, we would recommend that such a moratorium extend beyond April 2025 to allow for the implementation of any policy recommended by the working group. While a permanent prohibition on all hemp-derived intoxicating cannabinoids is not an effective policy solution, a moratorium directly addresses the current policy problem – the proliferation of unregulated, untested intoxicating products readily available to children – and will give regulators and stakeholders the time necessary to develop an effective regulatory regime.

We are grateful to the sponsor for bringing this issue to the committee. We will gladly participate in a working group to address this multifaceted challenge and are happy to lend our expertise to any rulemaking necessary to appropriately regulate the manufacture and sale of hemp-derived and synthesized intoxicating cannabinoids.

Thank you for your consideration. Our office can be available to answer any questions you may have at the work session.