



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 1996

An Act to Regulate Synthetic Hemp-derived Cannabinoids

January 31, 2024

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, my name is Craig Lapine. I am the Director of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF). I am speaking Neither for Nor Against LD 1996, *An Act to Regulate Synthetic Hemp-derived Cannabinoids*.

Maine is witnessing an influx of beverages and other ingestible consumer products containing synthesized or artificial THC derived from hemp. THC is the primary psychoactive chemical in cannabis, and these products are intoxicating. However, these products currently fall outside the regulatory frameworks we have for alcohol, cannabis, scheduled drugs, or other intoxicants. Like many Maine people, we at DACF are concerned about the State's limited ability to age-gate or restrict access to these products.

DACF has two points of connection to this issue: Our Animal & Plant Health Division has relationships with Maine's hemp businesses because we license hemp growers. Additionally, our Quality Assurance & Regulation Division is tasked with enforcing retail compliance with the Maine Food Code and the federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. This includes ensuring that all food and food products offered for sale in Maine are properly labeled, including a complete list of all ingredients and any necessary disclosures.

This resolve asks DACF to convene the conversation among relevant State agencies and other stakeholders to develop potential solutions that address the gap in existing law. We are willing to do that. We are hopeful that, with the right people at the table, we can develop proposals that support Maine's nascent hemp industry while ensuring the safety of Maine people—especially our children.

HARLOW BUILDING
18 ELKINS LANE
AUGUSTA, MAINE



PHONE: (207) 287-3200
FAX: (207) 287-2400
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

However, this amendment also imposes a moratorium on the sale of food containing THC determined to be intoxicating beginning on the effective date of this act. This short-term but immediate ban needs to be carefully considered. It could have unintended impacts on Maine hemp products and small businesses.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.