

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veteran and Legal Affairs,

My name is Matthew Bayliss, a resident of Cumberland, a registered caregiver, and the owner and operator of a small adult-use cannabis cultivation facility in South Portland. Today, I stand before you to testify in favor of LD40.

Maine's cannabis industry, with an annual revenue of \$500 million, operates within a regulatory framework contaminated by codified stigma and requires immediate remediation to protect the regulated industry from a fatal dose of overregulation. The thoughtful and precise corrections within LD40 is the correct remediation method to guarantee a product that is safe for all.

As someone deeply entrenched in Maine's adult-use cannabis market since its inception three and a half years ago, I can no longer, in good conscience, endorse this industry to potential employees. The burdensome regulatory environment dissuades skilled laborers from joining, hindered by lengthy background checks and delays in receiving industry identification cards (IIC's). Overregulation inflates operational costs, pushing many businesses to the brink, struggling to meet tax obligations. Rather than supporting us to thrive and provide better wages and benefits to our employees, the state seems content with stifling our growth, portraying us as reckless villains endangering public safety.

The stress of operating a small business in 2024 is daunting enough without the constant threat of hefty fines and license revocations looming overhead. While we strive to emulate Maine's successful craft beer industry, the Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP) seems more focused on preparing for federal legalization and transforming Maine into an import state. Our attempts to collaborate with OCP on policy reforms have been fruitless, with stakeholder engagement contingent on adherence to their narrow viewpoint. We are suffocating under the weight of these regulations and desperately seek breathing room.

LD40 is our beacon of hope, offering a chance to breathe life into the cannabis industry and provide a lifeline to struggling small businesses. I implore you to support this bill, recognizing its significance in revitalizing our industry and empowering entrepreneurs to thrive in a challenging market.

As this marks the final public hearing on cannabis-related matters for the 131st legislature, I extend my deepest gratitude for your time and careful consideration of our industry over the past 14 months. I am at your disposal to address any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Matthew Bayliss