

Opposing LD 903 – Further Regulation of Cannabis Advertising

Senator Craig Hickman, Representative Laura Supica, and esteemed members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jennifer Belcher, and I am the President of the Maine Cannabis Union, representing caregivers, small business owners, and industry professionals throughout our state.

I am here to strongly oppose LD 903, a bill that seeks to impose additional and unnecessary regulations on cannabis advertising.

The cannabis industry in Maine is already subject to some of the strictest advertising regulations in any legal market. Our packaging is prohibited from containing anything that might appeal to children—no cartoons, fruit imagery, or child-friendly shapes for edibles. Our logos and signage cannot include fruits, animals, or any imagery that could be considered attractive to minors.

On social media, our businesses face even harsher restrictions, often being blocked, shadow-banned, or outright banned simply for discussing cannabis, even in an educational context. Websites and online platforms already require age-gated access, and municipalities enforce strict sign codes for roadside advertising and business displays.

Meanwhile, industries such as alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceuticals do not face the same strict advertising regulations. These industries freely advertise their products on television, billboards, and social media, where they are seen by children, despite their potential dangers and extreme side effects. It is unfair and unreasonable to continue imposing excessive regulations on cannabis while allowing these industries to market without the same constraints.

Additionally, many aspects of this bill are ambiguous and leave significant room for interpretation. This lack of clarity could lead to inconsistent enforcement, creating further challenges for small business owners who are already navigating a heavily regulated industry.

This bill is redundant and places even more unnecessary burdens on small businesses that are already struggling under the weight of excessive regulation. Restricting cannabis advertising does not promote public safety—rather, it drives the industry further into the shadows, making it harder for consumers to find legal, safe products while giving an advantage to the illicit market.

Instead of further stifling Maine's small cannabis businesses, we should be working together to create reasonable, responsible policies based on research that allow us to compete and succeed while maintaining public safety.

We urge you to reject LD 903 and support the hardworking small business owners who are already operating under extensive advertising constraints. Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Jennifer Belcher

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