



Mark Barnett
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To the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,
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LD 948: OUGHT TO PASS

My name is Mark Barnett. I'm a resident of Auburn, the owner of an Adult Use retail store in Portland, and the Policy Director for the Maine Craft Cannabis Association. On behalf of our Association I am submitting this testimony in favor of LD 948: An Act to Reduce Administrative Burdens and Expand Access in the Laws Governing Cannabis. We believe this bill would provide material financial relief to hundreds of small struggling Maine businesses and their consumers while saving the Department of Administrative and Financial Services significant overhead.

This bill brings benefits to all program participants: consumers, businesses, and regulators. By allowing Maine's microbusiness cannabis farmers to offer more variety at a lower price, consumers will benefit from a more robust set of craft offerings in the medical program at lower prices. For caregiver farmers who are facing economic headwinds like never before, it allows them to double their canopy without material impact on land use and to better compete with folks lucky enough to qualify for and afford the unlimited canopy dispensary licenses. It also lower cultivating caregivers' legal risk, particularly for small mom and pop grows that make up a huge share of registered cultivating caregivers. For all businesses in the Maine Adult Use and Medical Cannabis programs, it reduces needless expenses around renewals and saves significant administrative hours by normalizing the business licensing process.

Lastly, it supports the Office of Cannabis Policy in reducing redundant hours reviewing the complex and overwhelming amount of material that, by statute and by rule, is currently required of renewing participants in the program—a process that should only be required for initial applications or for significant changes to operating plans. The cost savings from automatic renewals with no violations and extending licenses and registrations to two years from one will be significant. In a time of significant pressure on state revenues, we believe this will support DAFS' bottom line. It should be noted that this in no way limits the Office of Cannabis Policy's ability to oversee and regulate participants—our businesses can be



inspected at any time, and we enjoy very few of the legal protections that most other businesses operating in the state of Maine enjoy while bearing much higher legal and financial risks to provide the products our customers demand. Our licensing applications are often dozens to hundreds of pages long and must contain more information about our activities than is required of any remotely comparable industry.

Lastly, a vote to pass this bill also represents another step away from the stigma around cannabis businesses and consumers, who are too often automatically treated as bad actors simply for participating in a legal industry that has been legal in Maine since 1999 and that enjoys massive popular support from the Maine people. It supports the success of hundreds of businesses in both the Adult Use and Medical Use of Cannabis programs which together represent one of Maine's largest industries and one of our most accessible avenues of economic opportunity. Thank you for your time today and we look forward to improving this program together.

Sincerely,

Mark Barnett

Maine Craft Cannabis Association