

Supporting LD 948 – Reducing Administrative Burden and Expanding Access

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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Jennifer Belcher, and I am the President of the Maine Cannabis Union, representing small business owners, caregivers, and industry professionals dedicated to maintaining a fair and sustainable cannabis market in Maine.

I stand before you today in strong support of LD 948, a bill that aims to reduce the excessive administrative burdens placed on small cannabis businesses while expanding access in a way that benefits both entrepreneurs and consumers. The Maine Cannabis Union firmly believes that expanding plant counts is essential for keeping small businesses competitive in a market increasingly dominated by large multi-state operators.

Maine's cannabis industry has long been rooted in small-scale, craft production—something that both consumers and local stakeholders value and appreciate. However, under current regulations, operating as a small craft grower is becoming financially unsustainable. The high cost of compliance, coupled with burdensome licensing processes, is forcing many small businesses out of the market, leaving consumers with fewer choices and pushing our industry further toward corporate consolidation.

LD 948 also proposes an important shift to a two-year license renewal process, which would alleviate some of the administrative challenges faced by caregivers and small operators. A streamlined, fair renewal process would allow compliant businesses to focus on growth and sustainability rather than constantly navigating bureaucratic hurdles. However, while we support this provision, we do have concerns regarding the language around violations. Many of us, including myself and several of my members, have been issued unwarranted violations that cannot be contested or removed from our licenses. We support a simple, efficient renewal process for businesses with no legitimate violations but fear that vague or overly broad violation language could be weaponized as a retaliatory control mechanism.

Beyond this concern, we believe LD 948 is a step in the right direction for protecting small businesses, maintaining Maine's unique craft cannabis market, and ensuring that caregivers and independent operators are not pushed out by burdensome regulations.

We urge you to support this bill and stand with the small businesses that have built this industry from the ground up. Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Jennifer Belcher

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