

Good afternoon senator Hickman, representative sapika and all members of the committee of Veterans and Legal affairs,

I want to start by thanking you for this time and opportunity to speak. I have been a caregiver in Maine since 2017 and a licensed medical patient since 2011. I am vertically integrated with a small state and city approved store in biddeford as well as our own cultivation.

I am here to express my concerns about the growing burden of regulations in the cannabis industry, particularly regarding expanded testing, track-and-trace requirements, and potency limits. While I understand the importance of safety, I believe these measures are driving up operational costs without necessarily improving product quality or consumer safety.

As a small farm, we already adhere to stringent cleanliness, documentation, and quality standards. The additional layers of regulation—such as testing, digital tracking systems, and compliance hours—are creating financial strain on small producers like ourselves, ultimately increasing costs for patients and jeopardizing the viability of craft growers.

The increase in regulations and cost to produce on our end, will in turn only punish the patient's who use cannabis on a daily-- by limiting their access to quality medicine. In addition to limiting access, the increased cost to production will take away from any overages we as producers may have to donate to those who are truly in need that cannot afford to purchase nor produce the medicine they require.

Moreover, despite stricter regulations in other states, we continue to see instances of unsafe products reaching the market. Larger corporations are often better positioned to absorb these additional costs, putting small, local operators who have contributed to the industry's growth at a competitive disadvantage.

Cannabis should be treated as an agricultural product, not subject to over-regulation that disproportionately benefits large corporations. I urge you to reconsider these proposals and protect the small-scale farmers who are committed to producing clean and effective medicine for patients.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Jacob Claudino

Gaia Farms LLC