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Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and the esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

I am Kathleen Dillingham, and I serve as the Clerk for the Town of Oxford. I am writing to express concerns I have with L.D. 1840, "An Act to Amend the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act."

I question if the added language in Section 24, §2425-A, sub-§14, ¶D would result in municipal employees and officials would be able to access the database of registered caregivers within their municipality or in this instance, would that be considered public access. Access to this website has proven beneficial for our first responders and municipal officials in ensuring the legality of the medical cannabis industry.

I am in opposition of the changes made to Section 26, §2429-D, ¶3. The local authorization form is incredibly beneficial from the municipal standpoint. It provides a much-needed system of checks and balances.

In my capacity as Clerk, I oversee the issuance and record keeping of licenses issued, including adult use and medical cannabis licensing.

We have had instances, especially within medical cannabis licensing, that individuals and/or businesses do not realize per our ordinance there is still a required step that they go through the process of municipal approval. This becomes even more prevalent when both adult use and medical businesses are seeking renewal of their state license. Without the Office of Cannabis Policy notifying these individuals that in order to obtain their renewal license they will have to submit the local authorization form; I suspect many times our small office will have to be chasing down license holders. Once a state license has been issued, what actions are left for a municipality to take if the license holder never re-applied for a renewal license with the local authority? Requiring this form be submitted to OCP before a final state license is used allows that state to know that the business owner has indeed followed whatever requirements have been set forth by the municipality where the business is operating.

In Oxford, our process for a cannabis license, whether new or renewal, is to require a completion of an application. Businesses receive a courtesy notice 90 days before their local license expiration. Once submitted, our Police Chief, Fire Chief and Code Enforcement Officer visit the place of business to ensure compliance with all applicable municipal and state ordinances. The application is then signed by these individuals with their recommendation to either approve or deny and any pertinent concerns notated. A public hearing is scheduled and the Selectboard then approves or denies. If approved, the business completes the first portion of the local authorization form and our code enforcement officer completes the remainder of the form, it is notarized and emailed to the OCP with signatory sheets.

Even with sending a courtesy notice, we have still had several instances where both adult use and medical cannabis businesses have filed their local application only when they have been reminded by OCP that they are waiting on the local authorization form.

In closing, I urge the committee to consider amending the language concerning the website to allow for municipal access and to strike the language that removes the requirement of the local authorization form which provides the municipality some oversight of the legal cannabis industry within their community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kathleen Dillingham