



Maine Grocers &
Food Producers
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IN SUPPORT – LD 2134 An Act to Create an Exception to the Prohibition of Tobacco Sales in Retail Establishments Containing Pharmacies for Certain Small Grocery Stores

Dear Senator Ingwersen - Chair, Representative Meyer - Chair, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Christine Cummings and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association (MGFPA). The Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association is a business trade association representing Maine's food community; Main Street businesses, including independently owned and operated grocery stores and supermarkets, food and beverage producers and processors, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and supportive service companies.

LD 2134 offers a constructive path forward by resolving an unintended consequence from last session's passage of LD 166 *An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Tobacco Products in Pharmacies and Retail Establishments Containing Pharmacies*, Chapter 493 Public Law, which prohibits retailers with pharmacies within from renewing their tobacco license as of this April. This new law imposes an inequitable and arbitrary restriction on a subset of Maine businesses, prohibiting them from selling legal products while permitting others to continue without limitation. This selective policy creates a fundamentally unlevel playing field and places an undue burden on retailers that lease space to operate pharmacies, many of which serve as critical access points in rural communities.

Independent grocers play a unique and critical role in Maine's rural and small-town communities. Many of our members operate in areas where access to basic necessities such as food, prescriptions, and other essential goods is limited. In several towns, the local grocery store and the local pharmacy operate side by side under the same roof, sharing a footprint while remaining separate businesses. LD 2134 is important because it recognizes the need for fair, practical policy that does not unintentionally break this fragile ecosystem.

For many Maine communities, these combined grocery and pharmacy locations are not a convenience—they are a necessity. In towns such as Oakland, Randolph, Cornish, Corinth, Hermon, Fort Kent, Presque Isle, and Unity, residents depend on these businesses as their primary access point for both food and prescriptions. At a time when independent pharmacies are already under financial strain, further destabilizing these partnerships risks accelerating closures and deepening access gaps for seniors, low-income residents, and rural families.

Thank you to the Committee for your thoughtful attention to this issue and for supporting this narrowed resolution on behalf of Maine's small grocers and pharmacies.

Christine Cummings
Executive Director