



Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

Common Ground Country Fair

February 11, 2021

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

My name is Heather Spalding and I'm deputy director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). MOFGA supports LD 33 - *An Act To Improve the Laws Governing Hemp by Bringing Them into Compliance with Federal Law*.

MOFGA is committed to building a local and organic future for hemp and agriculture production in Maine. We operate an independent, third-party verification and certification program called Certified Clean Cannabis by MOFGA (MC3). The program caters to medical caregivers and adult-use producers in Maine who are striving to provide the safest and best quality products in the market. Our standards mirror the crop production components of the USDA National Organic Program. The MC3 Program is a voluntary marketing label designed to ensure customer and patient confidence in growing practices. To comply, all aspects of operations pertaining to MC3 standards must be verifiable through an audit process. This audit process consists of an MC3 system plan, review of plan, record keeping analysis, on-site inspection, and, ultimately, a certification decision. This process occurs on an annual basis and the certified operation is required to renew each year to maintain a valid certificate. The MC3 program has 17 certified producers in the program.

Farm viability is a key aspect of our ongoing policy work and, while we advocate for agricultural systems that minimize regulations between farmers and customers, we also want to ensure that products are safe for consumers and that consumers have confidence in the markets. This is where smart policies come in. We feel that product safety testing is absolutely essential to ensuring the integrity of hemp that will be consumed by the public. We hope that the state will adopt an approach for comprehensive testing at harvest that would assess levels of THC, pesticides, heavy metals, mold and microbes. We know from the recent news about lead and arsenic in processed baby food that the world is contaminated and we have to work extra hard to ensure the safety of our food and medicine.

MOFGA supports LD 33 and its call for testing, fees and background checks and we look forward to the state bringing the laws governing hemp into compliance with the federal law.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) started in 1971 and is the oldest and largest state organic organization in the country. We're a broad-based community that educates about and advocates for organic agriculture, illuminating its interdependence with a healthy environment, local food production, and thriving communities. We're a statewide organization that has experienced significant growth over the past couple of decades. We have 11,000 members, we certify 562 organic farms and processing facilities representing \$90 million in sales, and we are working hard to provide training and create opportunities for Maine's next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent. While MOFGA envisions a future of healthy ecosystems, communities, people and economies sustained by the practices of organic agriculture, we attribute our success to collaboration and outreach to growers across the management spectrum.