

Benjamin Marcus
Whitefield
LD 1996

LD1996 testimony, 1/31/2024

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My wife and I own and operate Sheepscot General Store and Farm. We grow and market an assortment of fruit and vegetables in our store and at the Hallowell Farmer's Market. We started growing hemp in 2019 and have built relationships with the small number of growers and processors who make full-spectrum hemp products in our state.

When I first heard about this bill, I brushed it off because I thought that nobody using my hemp is "synthesizing" cannabinoids. I thought to myself, "This is a bill that is going after the giant labs producing hemp-derived THC products." That's not what the people who I grow for do.

I grow an acre of hemp. That small scale fits my farm and is also right for growing high quality hemp that needs minimal processing to make full-spectrum products that fall within the federal definition of hemp. These products are made for people who aren't looking to get high. These products are safe and effective for people seeking relief from a number of things without the impairing effects of THC.

Then I learned that this bill is jeopardizing the businesses who I grow for and therefore my own hemp enterprise. This bill was written to regulate the companies who are selling hemp-derived THC in Maine. It was not written to ban the non-psychoactive, full-spectrum hemp products that are made from my crop. The hemp growers and brands in Maine have followed the rules, stayed in our lane, and continue to get tossed around by this sort of cumbersome bureaucracy. This bill will fundamentally destabilize these small, well-intentioned businesses and obviously needs further amending if it is to accomplish its goals without compromising Maine's full-spectrum hemp producers.