

Dear Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs committee,

The Board of the Maine Cannabis Coalition (MCC) has been mulling over LD 1319 outside of the stakeholders group suggested to form by Senator Hickman and other members of the VLA Committee. That group has come to consensus on many topics that are up for discussion during this legislative session. The stakeholder group is calling for an economic impact study and further proposing an economic study of the MMUMP itself. If the Committee acts on our advice, the two-year moratorium on the rules will no longer be necessary. However, MCC still strongly urges the committee to vote in favor of the cap on dispensary registration certificates.

This is important because in Washington state, the caregiver model was completely tossed aside and replaced by the dispensary model. MCC strongly maintains the position that allowing unlimited dispensary registrations opens the door for future replacement of the caregiver model, which undermines our business model. We would like to see future deliberation on an increased top tier in the caregiver model and, possibly, the addition of collectives. We are open to a new top tier of a caregiver requiring municipal approval, so long as the current caregiver model with 30 plants is left as is.

The department has yet to issue dispensary registrations since the initial 8 in 2018. The intent of the original language in 2018, allowing 6 more licenses and regarding a four-year state resident income tax requirement never served its purpose in helping Mainer's first. We sought to protect Maine-based businesses against large, out-of-state corporate interests that wish to send the money that patients pay them out of Maine.

MCC urges the Committee to fulfill that original intent and extend the date and insist that the application process be opened to our citizens. If the stakeholder group recommendations are adopted, we suggest stripping the rules moratorium from LD 1319 but leaving the dispensary license cap and extension of the residency sunset clause, then voting Ought To Pass as Amended.

Representatives of MCC will be available for comment at Monday's work session. Thank you for your time and consideration on preserving Maine's caregiver's, small businesses and patient access.

Respectfully yours.

Susan Meehan, Chairperson
United Cannabis Patients and Caregivers of Maine dba Maine Cannabis Coalition