

Good morning Chairman Hickman, Chairwoman Suppica and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs committee, my name is Paul T. McCarrier and I operate a vertically integrated medical cannabis company in Mid-Coast Maine. I am testifying in support of LD 584 "An Act to Make the Director of the Office of Cannabis Policy an Appointed Position Subject to Confirmation by the Legislature".

I believe this bill is an important step forward in restoring trust between the regulated community and the Office of Cannabis Policy. Frankly, trust is at an all time low and there is a distinct lack of confidence in the current leadership of OCP. If there was more trust, I believe you would see more support from the community for OCPs legislative agenda, such as mandatory testing and more regulations. From dozens of conversations with community members, there is no trust that under current leadership OCP would follow legislative intent on new legislation or listen to community feedback.

The way that OCP top leadership has implemented

new legislation seems to ignore the intent of your committee and the greater legislature. Though it was approved into law last year, there still is no "one click" renewal for annual registrations. This leads to additional work for small businesses that do not have law firms that do this for them, and takes away from the day to day operations providing for their patients and customers.

While I do not participate in the Adult Use program, there are frequent complaints about additional requirements that continue to be piled on these businesses. These include additional testing requirements, which sometimes comes not from an OCP guidance document, but from the tracking vendor METRC. This raises the question of who is deciding this policy, the company METRC or OCP leadership. Or are they one and the same?

While the rank and file have become easier to work with, the leadership at OCP seems to take a hostile stance against the community they regulate. There is constant fear about retribution if you speak out. There is the feeling that OCP does not want many of these small, mom and pop businesses to succeed,

based upon actions such as a \$2,500 late fee for application renewal and additional inspections for "troublemakers".

This lack of trust has been building for years and was not as serious under the previous director, Erik Gunderson. Under Gunderson's leadership, there was the feeling that OCP wanted to see the program grow and succeed. There was hope that under the current director, this would continue and grow. There is palpable disappointment this has not occurred. I believe if this bill was law when a new director was being sought, the Senate and greater legislature would have been able to divine the intent, have important questions answered, and there would have been some sort of accountability for OCP leadership.

For the reasons explained above, I'm asking you to support and vote ought to pass on LD 584. Thank you for your attention to this important bill and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Paul McCarrier
Monroe
LD 584

Good morning Chairman Hickman, Chairwoman Suppica and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs committee, my name is Paul T. McCarrier and I operate a vertically integrated medical cannabis company in Mid-Coast Maine. I am testifying in support of LD 584 "An Act to Make the Director of the Office of Cannabis Policy an Appointed Position Subject to Confirmation by the Legislature".

I believe this bill is an important step forward in restoring trust between the regulated community and the Office of Cannabis Policy. Frankly, trust is at an all time low and there is a distinct lack of confidence in the current leadership of OCP. If there was more trust, I believe you would see more support from the community for OCPs legislative agenda, such as mandatory testing and more regulations. From dozens of conversations with community members, there is no trust that under current leadership OCP would follow legislative intent on new legislation or listen to community feedback.

The way that OCP top leadership has implemented new legislation seems to ignore the intent of your committee and the greater legislature. Though it was approved into law last year, there still is no "one click" renewal for annual registrations. This leads to additional work for small businesses that do not have law firms that do this for them, and takes away from the day to day operations providing for their patients and customers.

While I do not participate in the Adult Use program, there are frequent complaints about additional requirements that continue to be piled on these businesses. These include additional testing requirements, which sometimes comes not from an OCP guidance document, but from the tracking vendor METRC. This raises the question of who is deciding this policy, the company METRC or OCP leadership. Or are they one and the same?

While the rank and file have become easier to work with, the leadership at OCP seems to take a hostile stance against the community they regulate. There is constant fear about retribution if you speak out. There is the feeling that OCP does not want many of these small, mom and pop businesses to succeed, based upon actions such as a \$2,500 late fee for application renewal and additional inspections for "troublemakers".

This lack of trust has been building for years and was not as serious under the previous director, Erik Gunderson. Under Gundersons leadership, there was the feeling that OCP wanted to see the program grow and succeed. There was hope that under the current director, this would continue and grow. There is palpable disappointment this has not occurred. I believe if this bill was law when a new director was being sought, the Senate and greater legislature would have been able to divine the intent, have important questions answered, and there would have been some sort of accountability for OCP leadership.

For the reasons explained above, I'm asking you to support and vote ought to pass on LD 584. Thank you for your attention to this important bill and I'm happy to answer any questions.