

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition to

LD 948 - An Act to Reduce Administrative Burdens and Expand Access in the Laws Governing Cannabis
March 19, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 948 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

While some municipal officials support some type of expansion of the cannabis industry, and most would like to see more parity between the medical and recreational programs, almost all feel that a more sustainable model should be developed before allowing any expansion of cannabis to continue.

Specifically, expanding the plant canopy will change the business from a Tier 1 facility to a Tier 2 facility, which is a different license type. MMA members feel that if a business seeks to expand their operation, that business should apply for the appropriate license, already set in statute, and pay the applicable licensing fees. Further, by extending the caregivers license to a two-year renewal cycle, it would deprive municipalities of a year of licensing revenue—the only way municipalities see any benefit from the cannabis industry.

Likewise, members are opposed to any expansion to plant count or canopy for caregivers. Medical cannabis caregivers by definition “means an individual who provides care for a qualifying patient in accordance with” the statute. A caregiver is intended to be a small operation that helps a qualifying patient get access to their cannabis and this proposal seems to move these operators into a more large-scale model. Municipal leaders strongly oppose the significant expansion as proposed and suggest at least adding municipal approval if a caregiver wants to expand their business.

More and more information is being released regarding the public health risks associated with cannabis use among youth as the industry ages. Local leaders give pause to any legislation that would make more widespread or allow those benefiting from cannabis economically to increase their revenues or their customer base, to give time for public health officials to collaborate with industry leaders.

As an industry that has been historically touted as self-sufficient, and lucrative to the State and cultivators, there is not a lot of interest among local officials to help ease administrative costs. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.