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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association
In Support Of

LD 1455 - An Act to Prevent Illegal Cannabis Growing Operations in the State
May 8, 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 support of LD 1455 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 MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

Overall, municipal officials support the provisions in LD 1455 and understand the need to get a handle on the illicit cannabis grows occurring throughout the state and the bill before you would prohibit the issuance of a cannabis license when an individual or property is under investigation for illegal activity. From a municipal standpoint, this is a reasonable and necessary measure to protect the integrity of Maine's regulated cannabis market but also want to stress the importance of building in safeguards to prevent selective enforcement, bias, or misuse of the provision as a tool for retaliation or political pressure.

Being on the front lines, municipalities must balance public safety, local enforcement capacity, and community trust. Allowing a license to be issued while an individual or property is the subject of an active investigation for illegal cannabis activity would undermine the goals of the legal market and sends a troubling signal to both compliant operators and the public.

For local leaders, an investigation indicates that a credible concern has been raised, and whether the investigation involves unlicensed cultivation, tax evasion, or ties to illicit networks, such activity should prompt pause—not a license issuance. Municipalities already struggle with enforcement gaps, especially when illicit activity operates in parallel with or under the guise of legitimacy. This provision could very well serve as a stopgap to ensure due diligence and to prevent known bad actors from exploiting regulatory blind spots.

Conversely to the general support for the bill, the power to delay or deny licensure on the basis of an "investigation" must be wielded carefully and transparently. Municipal officials cannot allow a system where certain individuals or businesses are quietly blackballed based on vague allegations, politically motivated complaints, or selective enforcement.

Personalities and politics can play an outsized role in regulatory decisions and would reiterate the provisions of LD 1455 should be narrowly defined and procedurally safeguarded, to be sure the tool is used to protect the public, and not to punish competitors, settle grudges, or chill participation in the legal market—especially for newcomers who may lack political connections.



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Additionally, officials point out situations where investigations can be prolonged without a resolution or other times when investigations are opened as a pretext to block a license indefinitely. Without clear standards for what constitutes a valid investigation, timelines for resolution, and the opportunity for applicants to respond or appeal, this provision could invite legal challenges and undermine trust in the licensing process.

Finally, while local leaders support the intent of this provision to ensure that cannabis licenses are not issued to individuals or properties currently under a legitimate investigation for illegal activity, they also urge the committee to include safeguards to prevent abuse and ensure fairness, including an appeals process, that would help to maintain confidence in the licensing system.

Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective.



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