To: Chief Edward J. Tolan, Executive Director, Maine Chiefs of Police Association  
   Executive Director Mary-Anne LaMarre, Maine Sheriffs’ Association  
   Executive Director Stephen W. Gove, Maine Municipal Association  
   Administrator Lauren Haven, Maine County Commissioners Association  
   Adult Use Marijuana Opt-in Municipalities  
From: Director Erik Gundersen, Office of Marijuana Policy  
Date: Friday, August 14, 2020  
Subject: Launch of Adult Use Marijuana Industry in Maine

Background

The Mills Administration created the Office of Marijuana Policy (OMP) within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services in February 2019. As you know, OMP is responsible for the oversight of all aspects of legalized marijuana, including Maine's existing Medical Use of Marijuana Program.

Since our creation, OMP has been working to implement the regulatory structure necessary to honor the will of Maine voters and introduce lawful retail sales of adult use marijuana. We are now ready to launch Maine’s adult use marijuana program, and the purpose of this memorandum is to update you on the latest developments related to the introduction of adult use marijuana in Maine.

OMP’s Rollout Plan

Earlier this year, OMP indefinitely postponed the planned spring debut of Maine’s adult use industry in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Later today, OMP intends to publicly announce its new timeline for active licensure in our adult use marijuana program, which, for the first time, will identify specific dates for active licensure of establishments and retail sales to the public in Maine.

The following key dates will be announced:

- **Active Licensure**: Tuesday, September 8, 2020
- **Retail Sales Launch Date**: Friday, October 9, 2020

Active licensure is the culmination of a three-step application process which also includes conditional licensure and local authorization, respectively. An active license is required for adult use establishments to come into possession, cultivate, process and sell adult use marijuana.
While OMP expects to issue licenses in each of the four categories of adult use establishments (cultivation, products manufacturing, retail sale, and testing), the retail sales launch date will prohibit nursery cultivation and marijuana stores from conducting sales to the public until on or after October 9, 2020. OMP identified early on that the lack of a retail sales launch date presented many challenges for both the state and industry. Setting such a date ensures all marijuana and marijuana product is tested and stores have time to stock their shelves. This will also allow product to build up in the system to withstand the demand for marijuana and marijuana product in the first few days of legal retail sales.

This approach has been used in other states and has been well received by industry stakeholders.

**COVID-19-related Considerations**

The public’s health and safety are at the forefront of every decision made by OMP. It is of such importance, you will find references to public health and safety in both our mission statement and organizational guiding principles.

On Friday, April 10, 2020, OMP announced the indefinite postponement of the adult use industry launch in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we were poised to launch this new industry earlier this year, we were unwilling to sacrifice the high standards we have set for the adult use program by launching during an emerging public health pandemic and in the absence of a testing facility. With the support of the public health community, municipalities across the state, and the industry we regulate, we have used the last few months to ensure this new industry is introduced to Maine consumers in a manner that is as responsible as possible.

To that end, we have collaborated with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services’ Center for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a COVID-19 checklist that will be made available to all adult use licensees.

The checklist provides important public health guidance and business considerations that should be helpful for both employers and retailers. While this is a living document that is subject to revision as more is learned about COVID-19 and the state’s response adapts accordingly, we hope that it serves as a valuable resource to the businesses we regulate as they seek to safely and responsibly establish their new businesses.

**Conclusion**

We appreciate your commitment to keeping your staff, members, and the public apprised of developments related to marijuana over the course of the last year and a half and look forward to working with you over the coming weeks, months, and years to successfully implement Maine’s adult use marijuana program.

As we move into active licensure and formally operationalize Maine’s adult use marijuana program, please know that your partners at OMP remain committed to working with you to address shared concerns and continued program improvement.
If you have any questions or concerns about the work of the office, I encourage you or your staff to contact David Heidrich, OMP’s director of engagement and community outreach. He can be reached via the following:

- **Online:** [https://www.maine.gov/dafs/omp/about/contact](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/omp/about/contact)
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