

Campaign to End Maine Adult Use Cannabis Cleared to Begin

Maine Ballot Initiative Approved to Repeal Adult Use Cannabis Industry While Imposing New Medical Cannabis Rules

Maine Election Officials Clear Ballot Initiative Aimed at Ending Adult-Use Cannabis Market

Maine election officials have approved a ballot initiative that, if passed, would dismantle the state's roughly \$250 million adult-use cannabis industry and introduce stricter testing standards for medical cannabis. The approval allows organizers to begin collecting signatures, marking the second ongoing citizen campaign in New England attempting to cancel legal adult-use marijuana.

A similar effort in neighboring Massachusetts recently claimed to have gathered enough signatures to advance past its initial stage, amid allegations of election fraud, signaling a growing push in the region to roll back legalized cannabis markets.

Adult-Use Cannabis Would Sunset While Medical Marijuana Remains with New Regulations

On Dec. 8, the Maine Secretary of State approved the Act to Amend the Cannabis Legalization Act and the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act for signature collection.

If the initiative qualifies for the ballot and is approved by voters, Maine's adult-use cannabis market would sunset on Jan. 1, 2028. Existing operators could continue operating under medical cannabis licenses, and personal possession of up to 2.5 ounces would remain legal, along with medical cannabis use.

However, the proposal would introduce new compliance requirements for medical marijuana, including mandatory product testing and adherence to the state's track-and-trace system—protocols not currently required in Maine's medical cannabis market. According to the Maine Morning Star, about 6% of adult-use cannabis products fail tests for banned contaminants, highlighting the potential impact of these new standards.

To qualify for the ballot, the initiative must gather roughly 68,000 valid signatures from registered voters by early February. State records identify Colin Mack of Brunswick as the petition sponsor. Mack did not respond to requests for comment.

Maine Cannabis Sales Remain Strong Despite Potential Repeal Efforts

Maine's legal cannabis market has continued to grow. In 2024, annual sales at the state's 266 licensed adult-use stores and medical dispensaries reached nearly \$244 million, according to the state Office of Cannabis Policy. Sales for 2025 are projected to slightly exceed that figure.

Maine initially legalized adult-use cannabis in 2016, and the market has steadily expanded since, becoming a significant economic sector for the state. The ballot initiative now introduces uncertainty, potentially reshaping the industry and forcing operators to reconsider business strategies if the measure gains voter approval.

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