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June 6, 2022

Mr. Roy E. McKinney
Director
Maine Drug Enforcement Agency
Department of Public Safety
166 State House Station
45 Commerce Drive, Suite 1
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Director McKinney:

I recently learned of an increasing number of marijuana growing operations being carried out at residential properties in Maine. I am told that this type of activity is popping up in other states where marijuana has been legalized, and I wanted to bring the concerns raised by my constituents to your attention.

By way of example, a constituent from Winterport, who is also a former member of my staff, recently contacted my office regarding one such house discovered down the street from her home. She explained that the house caught fire, and the Fire Marshall discovered a substantial number of marijuana plants throughout the home. He indicated the fire was caused by grow lamps and fans that had overloaded the circuits, starting a fire. He also described the home as having plants on every surface and each floor, with the windows blacked out. As of last month, the constituent believed that law enforcement had not been to the site since the fire, leaving plants inside the now dangerous structure.

The constituent indicated that she also spoke with local law enforcement and the Maine Office of Marijuana Policy about her concerns. She explained that she was told by these sources that there are 30-40 of these houses known to law enforcement, that the houses sometimes have ties to organized crime or gangs outside of the United States, and that some people tasked with growing marijuana plants at these sites are victims of human trafficking. The constituent believes that law enforcement response may be hindered by a lack of interest in prosecuting cases of this nature, despite appearances that this problem may be widespread.

While I understand that Maine has legalized the growth, sale, and use of recreational marijuana, I wanted to share this information with you regarding increased illegal activity related to the marijuana industry. I certainly appreciate your work to provide coordinated, collaborative drug enforcement efforts throughout the state. With this in mind, please review this matter and take any actions you deem appropriate, consistent with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator