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December 6, 2021

Bureau of Motor Vehicles
L.D. 1618 Working Group
c/o Brittane Guerette
101 Hospital St.
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Working Group Members,

I am writing with regard to L.D. 1618, the bill that placed a temporary moratorium on the approval of any new motor vehicle registration plates and calls for the initiation of a registration plate working group. An unintended consequence of the bill's passage creates a significant hardship for our organization – one that impacts nearly 1600 Mainers who, in good faith, contributed to our "Adventure" specialty plate over the past 16 months.

By way of background, in February 2019, Maine Outdoor Brands reached out to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to explore the steps necessary to create a specialty plate for our organization. Over the ensuing 16 months, we worked with the BMV to modify our plate design to conform with the standards provided by their office – color, placement of images, etc. On June 9, 2020, we received "go forward" approval from then director of vehicle services, Stephen Ashcroft. And approximately a month later, confronting head-on the challenges posed by the pandemic that made in-person signature collecting impossible, we launched our website, www.adventureplate.com and a comprehensive paid and organic social media effort, a major investment for our organization. In less than 90 days, we had nearly 500 signatures and donations. Within a year, that number grew to 1,600. With the passage of L.D. 1618 on July 14, 2021, we paused our efforts. And on October 20, 2021, upon receipt of a letter from the Secretary of State's office with explicit instructions to put our signature gathering effort on hold indefinitely, we took the website down, in full compliance.

We understand the intent of L.D. 1618 and the challenges it intends to address. For organizations that had not finalized their approvals from the BMV or reached a critical volume of pre-order sales, it makes sense. In our case, however, where we've invested hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars in reaching 80% of the prescribed goal, to change the rules at this point creates consequences that we assert are unfair, undermines the credibility and legitimacy of our organization, and ignores the expectations of 1,600 Mainers who signed up for the plate and individually donated \$25 apiece, representing \$40,000 towards our \$50,000 goal, as established by the State.



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Founded in 2017, Maine Outdoor Brands is focused on economic development through outdoor recreation – a \$3 billion industry in our state, per the US Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis, representing 4.2% of Maine’s GDP in 2019 – the fifth highest of any state in the country. We believe strengthening our state’s outdoor industry can help sustainably grow our economy and attract a younger workforce to the state. Proceeds from the Adventure plate would be used for programs and initiatives to foster outdoor entrepreneurship and support careers in the outdoor industry through education and mentorship. Our more than 125 members are truly in every corner of the state, from guiding services and small manufacturers to industry giants like L.L.Bean, Old Town Canoe and Sterling Rope.

We ask that in drafting your recommendation to the Transportation Committee, you exempt Maine Outdoor Brands from the moratorium out of fairness and recognition of the hardship it would create for our organization whose mission is to positively impact our state. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our unique situation. I am happy to provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Kordick". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jenny Kordick
Executive Director