

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 23, 2023

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

We write to express our concerns about recent reports of a memo produced and circulated by Border Patrol officials regarding alleged illegal Chinese marijuana growing operations in the state of Maine.¹ According to that memo, law enforcement in the state have identified 270 suspected properties that have been used as illegal Chinese growing operations, producing an estimated \$4.37 billion in revenue. These illegal growing operations are detrimental to Maine businesses that comply with State laws, and we urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to shut them down.

Maine state law permits marijuana use in certain circumstances, and the Maine Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP) provides oversight. OCP is responsible for licensing, compliance, and general oversight of both medical marijuana use and recreational use, and it consults with other state agencies—including the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Labor; and the Department of Public Safety—on rulemaking related to their areas of expertise.

These reports of illegal growing operations within the state are alarming, and we are writing to request additional information about what the DOJ is doing to address this situation. We request answers to the following questions:

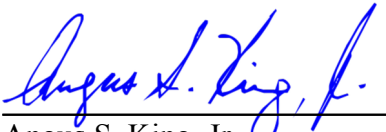
1. What is the DOJ doing to address illegal growing operations, including illegal growing operations that are run by foreign governments or entities?
2. How are the profits from these illegal operations being returned to the country of origin?
3. These reports identify Chinese ownership. Is the DOJ aware of this alleged Chinese ownership or any other foreign involvement in these operations?

¹ Michael Shepherd, “Leaked memo says Maine has hundreds of illegal Chinese marijuana grows worth billions,” Bangor Daily News (Aug. 18, 2023), <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2023/08/18/politics/leaked-memo-maine-illegal-chinese-marijuana-grows-billions-joam40zk0w/>.


4. Please provide any additional information about the memo identified in these reports, including who produced it, when the information contained in the memo was first obtained, and what actions have been taken in response?
5. What action is the DOJ taking to swiftly shutdown any illegal marijuana growing operations in the state of Maine?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

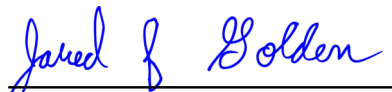
Sincerely,




Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Cc: Troy A. Miller, U.S. Customs and Border Protection