

Jan-25-02 04:12pm From-

T-162 P.002/002 F-799

MAURICE D. HINCHEY
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
INTERIOR

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515-3226

January 10, 2001

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2431 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3226
(202) 225-6335

BINGHAMTON OFFICE:
100A FEDERAL BUILDING
BINGHAMTON, NY 13901
(607) 773-2768

KINGSTON OFFICE:
291 WALL STREET
KINGSTON, NY 12401
(845) 331-4466

ITHACA OFFICE:
123 S. CAYUGA ST., SUITE 201
ITHACA, NY 14860
(607) 273-1388

MONTICELLO OFFICE:
(845) 791-7116

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson
Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration
700 Army-Navy Drive
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Administrator Hutchinson:

Congratulations on your new position as head of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

I am concerned by the DEA's recent interpretive rule regarding hemp. Under this rule "any product that contains any amount" of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinols (THC) is considered to be a schedule I controlled substance under the Federal Controlled Substances Act, even if it does not cause a psychoactive effect or "high." While I appreciate the DEA's new interim rule that allows the use of certain hemp products, I believe the your interpretation is too strict a reading of marijuana laws that were intended to prevent psychoactive effects.

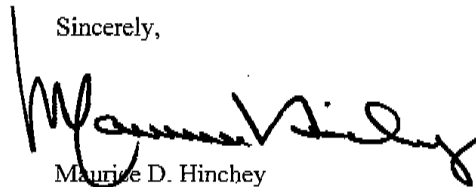
I understand that the DEA must follow the statute in question. The interpretive rule, however, goes beyond the intent of the CSA and other marijuana-control laws passed by Congress. Products such as hemp seed and oil - which allow only a harmless, trace amount of THC to enter the human body and do not cause psychoactive effects - were not what Congress was seeking to ban. For example, the DEA does not ban poppy seeds with trace amounts of opiates or fruit juices with trace amounts of alcohol.

You could correct this discrepancy by very easily revising the interim rule to include hemp seed and oil with minimal THC levels that would not cause psychoactive effects. Studies have demonstrated that seeds containing 2 parts per million and oils containing 5 parts per million of THC would be acceptable levels. Food products made with these ingredients are safe for human consumption. This inclusion would be more consistent with the intent of drug control laws passed by Congress.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



Maurice D. Hinchey

MDH:mi