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Leading Hemp Advocacy Groups Applaud Introduction of California Hemp Farming Bill SB 676

California Businesses and Farmers Await Passage of New Bill to Allow Commercial Farming of Industrial Hemp

SACRAMENTO, CA — The leading hemp advocacy organizations Vote Hemp and the Hemp Industries Association are applauding the introduction two weeks ago of SB 676 in support of hemp farming in the state of California. The bill clarifies that industrial hemp is separate and distinct from forms of Cannabis used to produce marijuana and if passed will allow commercial farming of industrial hemp, which occurred in the state up until shortly after World War II. Industrial hemp is the non-psychoactive, low-THC, oilseed and fiber varieties of the Cannabis sativa plant. Hemp has absolutely no value as a recreational drug.

SB 676 was introduced on Friday, February 18th by state Senator Mark Leno. Senator Leno believes that hemp farming will help revitalize California's economy, "The time is long over due for California farmers to be allowed to grow this sustainable and profitable crop once again. The passage of SB 676 will create new jobs and economic opportunities for many farmers and manufacturers through out the state."

A variety of products made from industrial hemp including healthy food and natural body care products as well as eco-friendly clothing are made in California. "There are over 50 member businesses of the Hemp Industries Association (HIA) that make or sell hemp products in the state of California alone that could benefit from an in-state source of hemp seed, fiber and oil", says Eric Steenstra, Executive Director of the HIA. "Because of an outdated federal policy these businesses are forced to import millions of dollars of industrial hemp from Canada, China and Europe."

"Dr. Bronner's currently purchases twenty tons of hemp oil each year from Canada. We look forward to the day that we can meet our supply needs from hemp produced right here in our home state," says David Bronner, President of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps of Escondido.

To date, 17 states have passed pro-hemp laws or resolutions, including the California Assembly in 1999 when it passed a resolution declaring that "the Legislature should consider action to revise the legal status of industrial hemp to allow for its growth in California as an agricultural and industrial crop."

SB 676 would only allow farmers to produce and enter into the marketplace the parts of the industrial hemp plant already legal to import under state and federal law: its seed, oil, fiber and woody core. "SB 676 would not conflict with federal law or interfere with the enforcement of marijuana laws," explains Patrick Goggin, California Legal Counsel for Vote Hemp.

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The Hemp Industries Association (HIA) represents the interests of the hemp industry and encourages the research and development of new hemp products. Vote Hemp is a national, single-issue, non-profit organization dedicated to the acceptance of and a free market for low-THC industrial hemp and to changes in current law to allow U.S. farmers to once again grow this agricultural crop. More information about hemp legislation and the crop's many uses may be found at www.VoteHemp.com and www.TheHIA.org.