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Rep. Ron Paul Introduces H.R. 1831, The Industrial Hemp Farming Act, on Heels of Successful Second Annual *Hemp History Week*
Senate Bill In Support of Industrial Hemp Farming Expected to Follow

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For the fourth time since the federal government outlawed hemp farming in the United States over 50 years ago, a federal bill was introduced on May 11, which if passed, will remove restrictions on the cultivation of industrial hemp, the non-drug oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis*. The chief sponsor, Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) circulated a “Dear Colleague” letter last week seeking support for H.R. 1831, The Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2011. H.R. 1831 is almost identical to H.R. 1866, which was introduced in the 111th Congress in 2009.

“We are pleased to see the re-introduction of the Industrial Hemp Farming Act in Congress. Vote Hemp is currently working with a Democratic Senator who is preparing to introduce companion legislation in the Senate in support of industrial hemp farming,” says Vote Hemp President, Eric Steenstra. “It is due time for the Senate as well as President Obama and the Attorney General to prioritize the crop’s benefits to farmers and to take action like Rep. Paul and the cosponsors of H.R. 1831 have done. With the U.S. hemp industry valued at over \$400 million in annual retail sales and growing, a change in federal policy to allow hemp farming would mean instant job creation, among many other economic and environmental benefits,” adds Steenstra.

U.S. companies that manufacture or sell products made with hemp include Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps, a California company that manufactures the number-one-selling natural soap in the U.S. as well as best-selling hemp food manufacturers, such as French Meadow Bakery, Living Harvest, Manitoba Harvest, Nature’s Path, Nutiva and Sequel Naturals who make their products from hemp grown in Canada. Sustainable hemp seed, fiber and oil are also used by major companies such as Ford Motors, Patagonia and The Body Shop.

“Public support for industrial hemp farming is growing in leaps and bounds in the U.S.,” explains Steenstra. “The second annual ***Hemp History Week***, celebrated from May 2-8, 2011 featured over 550 events in all 50 states. The campaign mobilized the support of tens of thousands of consumers, grass-roots activists and many high-profile celebrities from health and wellness experts to TV and entertainment personalities, professional athletes and renowned musicians.”

H.R. 1831 was introduced by chief sponsor Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) with 22 original cosponsors, including Rep. Baldwin (D-WI), Rep. Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. Clay (D-MO), Rep. Cohen (D-TN), Rep. DeFazio (D-OR), Rep. Ellison (D-MN), Rep. Farr (D-CA), Rep. Frank (D-MA), Rep. Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Hinchey (D-NY), Rep. Kucinich (D-OH), Rep. McClintock (R-CA), Rep. McDermott (D-WA), Rep. Miller (D-CA), Rep. Moran (D-VA), Rep. Nadler (D-NY), Rep. Pingree (D-ME), Rep. Polis (D-CO), Rep. Rohrabacher (R-CA), Rep. Schakowsky (D-IL), Rep. Stark (D-CA) and Rep. Woolsey (D-CA).

To date, seventeen states have passed pro-hemp legislation, and six states (Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia) have already authorized the licensing of farmers to grow the crop. However, despite state authorization to grow hemp, farmers in these states risk raids by federal agents, prison time and land forfeiture if they plant the crop, due to the failure of federal policy to distinguish oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis* (i.e., industrial hemp) from psychoactive varieties.

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More information about industrial hemp legislation and the crop's many uses can be found at www.VoteHemp.com.