



Senator Wyden and Senator Paul Introduce Bi-partisan Senate Companion Bill to H.R. 1831, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act

Historic Senate Bill Promises Economic Opportunity by Removing Restrictions on Industrial Hemp Farming in the United States

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Rand Paul (R-KY), Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced S. 3501, the Senate companion bill to H.R. 1831, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2011. If passed, the bill would remove federal restrictions on the cultivation of industrial hemp, the non-drug oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis*. The language of the bill mirrors that of H.R. 1831 which was introduced in the House this session. The full text of the bill, its status and a list of co-sponsors can be found at: <http://votehemp.com/legislation>.

“Introducing this bill is the first step toward a common sense policy on hemp that helps create American jobs,” says Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR). “It is vital that all advocates for industrial hemp redouble their efforts to win support in Congress if we are going to reestablish this economically important crop.”

To date, seventeen states have passed pro-hemp legislation, and ten states (Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia) have removed barriers to its production or research. However, despite state authorization to grow hemp, farmers in these states still risk raids by federal agents, prison time and property forfeiture if they plant the crop, due to the failure of federal policy to distinguish non-drug oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis* (i.e., industrial hemp) from psychoactive drug varieties.

“We are very pleased to see action being taken in the Senate on the 75th anniversary of the Marihuana Tax Act which put unreasonable restrictions on hemp farming. American farmers have been denied the right to grow a crop that our Founding Fathers considered essential to our nation's well-being. It is imperative now that other Senators co-sponsor this bill, and that President Obama and Attorney General Holder also take action to allow American farmers to grow hemp under state law,” says Vote Hemp President, Eric Steenstra. “With the U.S. hemp industry valued at over \$400 million in annual retail sales and growing, a change in federal policy to once again 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 Living Harvest, Manitoba Harvest, Nature's Path, Nutiva and Sequel Naturals, who all 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. Ironically, the Obama campaign is raising funds by selling hemp products made from imported Chinese hemp-blend fabric in their online store. The beautiful Monique Péan scarf could be made from American-grown hemp if not for the outdated policy forcing American companies to import their hemp materials from China, Europe and Canada.

Last year, for the fourth time since the federal government effectively outlawed hemp farming in the U.S. 75 years ago, a bill was introduced by Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) in the U.S. House of Representatives. If passed, H.R. 1831, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2011, would remove federal restrictions on the cultivation of industrial hemp by defining it as distinct from "marihuana" and allowing its farming and processing in accordance with state law.

H.R. 1831 was introduced by chief sponsor Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) with 22 original co-sponsors, 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). H.R. 1831 currently has 33 bipartisan co-sponsors, including the ranking member of the Agriculture Committee and seven Republicans.

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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 the agricultural crop. More information about hemp legislation and the crop's many uses may be found at www.VoteHemp.com or www.TheHIA.org. Video footage of hemp farming in other countries is available upon request by contacting Ryan Fletcher at 202-641-0277 or ryan@votehemp.com.