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Amendment to Allow Industrial Hemp Research Included in Farm Bill

Hemp Research First Step to Restoring American Hemp Agriculture and Manufacturing Industries

WASHINGTON, DC – Vote Hemp, the nation's leading hemp grassroots advocacy organization working to revitalize industrial hemp production in the U.S., is excited to report that an amendment to legalize hemp production for research purposes was included in the Farm Bill, which will soon be voted on in both the House and Senate. Originally introduced by Representatives Jared Polis (D-CO), Thomas Massie (R-KY) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), the amendment allows colleges and universities, and now also State Agriculture Departments per the conference committee revisions, to grow hemp for academic or agricultural research purposes, but applies only to states where industrial hemp farming is already legal under state law. The full text of the bill may be found at: <http://www.votehemp.com/FarmBill>.

"Although I strongly opposed the Republican Farm Bill, I was pleased to see that the bipartisan amendment that I offered with Representatives Blumenauer and Massie was included in the final bill that passed the House of Representatives today," said Rep. Polis. "This commonsense amendment will allow colleges and universities to grow and cultivate industrial hemp for academic and agricultural research purposes in states where industrial hemp cultivation is already legal. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to ensure that this language becomes law."

"This is an important victory for farmers, manufacturers, and consumers in Kentucky and across the country. Our amendment paves the way for production of industrial hemp by first allowing America's academic and research institutions to demonstrate that hemp and the products derived from hemp present a great economic opportunity for our country," said Rep. Massie. "The inclusion of our industrial hemp amendment in the farm bill reflects widespread support for cultivating industrial hemp and proves Congress can work together in a bipartisan fashion to help the American economy at a time when creating jobs is a national priority."

So far in the 2014 legislative season, industrial hemp legislation has been introduced in eleven states: Hawaii, Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey (carried over from 2013), New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington (two bills were carried over from 2013) West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The full text of these states' hemp bills may also be found at:

<http://www.votehemp.com/state.html#2014>.

“With the U.S. hemp industry estimated at over \$500 million in annual retail sales and growing, a change in federal law to allow for colleges and universities to grow hemp for research would mean that we will finally begin to regain the knowledge that unfortunately has been lost over the past fifty years,” says Vote Hemp President, Eric Steenstra. “The American Farm Bureau Federation announced their opposition to the controlled substance classification of hemp earlier this month, and now passage of this amendment means America can get on track to once again become the predominant producer and manufacturer of hemp—one of the most versatile and ecological industrial crops on the planet.”

In addition to the Farm Bill amendment, two standalone industrial hemp bills have been introduced in the 113th Congress so far. H.R. 525, the "Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2013," was introduced in the U.S. House on February 6, 2013. The companion bill, S. 359, was introduced in the U.S. Senate soon thereafter on February 14, 2013. The bills define industrial hemp, exclude it from the definition of "marihuana" in the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), and give states the exclusive authority to regulate the growing and processing of the crop under state law. If passed, the bills would remove federal restrictions on the domestic cultivation of industrial hemp, defined as the non-drug oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis*. The full text of the bills, as well as their status and co-sponsors, can also be found at <http://VoteHemp.com/legislation>.

To date, thirty-two states have introduced pro-hemp legislation and twenty have passed pro-hemp legislation. Ten states (California, Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia) have defined industrial hemp as distinct and removed barriers to its production. Three states (Hawaii, Kentucky and Maryland) have passed bills creating commissions or authorizing research. Nine states (California, Colorado, Illinois, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Vermont and Virginia) have passed resolutions. And eight states (Arkansas, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota and Vermont) have passed study bills. However, despite state authorization to grow hemp, farmers in those states still risk raids by federal agents, prison time, and property and civil asset 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 (i.e., "marihuana").

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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.