

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2014



CONTACT:

Lauren Stansbury, 402-540-1208

lauren@votehemp.com

Eric Steenstra, 703-729-2225

eric@votehemp.com

Congressional Omnibus Appropriations Bill Includes Hemp Amendment
Hemp Amendment Restricts Spending By DOJ and DEA in Contravention of Farm Bill
Hemp Provision

WASHINGTON, DC – Vote Hemp, the nation’s leading grassroots hemp advocacy organization working to change state and federal laws to allow commercial hemp farming, supports the inclusion of a hemp amendment in the Congressional omnibus budget bill. Passed by both the House and the Senate Appropriations Committee, the 2014 Commerce, Justice and Sciences (CJS) appropriations bill includes an historic amendment to prohibit the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) from spending funds “in contravention of Section 7606” of the 2014 Farm Bill. Originally offered in May of 2014 by Rep. Massie, the hemp amendment was introduced in the House and passed by a vote of 246-162. A similar amendment was offered by Rep. Bonamici (D-OR) and passed by a vote of 237-170. Subsequently, in June of 2014, complementary language co-written by Sen. McConnell (R-KY) and Sen. Merkley (D-OR), was offered to the Senate Appropriations Committee in June of 2014 and passed by a vote of 22-8.

Section 7606 of the Farm Bill, also known as *The Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp Research* amendment, defines industrial hemp and authorizes research and pilot programs in states that have legalized the crop.

The passage of this CJS hemp amendment and its inclusion in the final omnibus bill was a result of support from a number of members including Senators McConnell, Merkley, Leahy and Tester, as well as Representatives Massie and Bonamici. The omnibus budget bill now heads to President Obama’s desk where he is expected to sign it.

“This measure will help prevent our legal hemp seeds secured by state Departments of Agriculture and used for legal pilot programs from being blocked by DEA or other federal agencies in the future,” Senator McConnell said. “These legal pilot programs authorized by my legislation could help boost our state’s economy and lead to future jobs.”

“Last spring the DEA wasted precious taxpayer resources when it confiscated a shipment of hemp seeds intended for a pilot project in Kentucky,” said Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY). “By defunding further DEA interference, this amendment saves taxpayer dollars and gives states and research institutions the freedom to pursue hemp pilot programs.”

“We applaud this Congress for protecting the rights of states that seek to begin or have already implemented hemp pilot programs,” said Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp. “By approving this measure, Congress is sending a clear message to DEA that it should respect the law and work cooperatively with states to allow them to conduct hemp research and pilot programs.”

To date, eighteen states have defined industrial hemp as distinct and removed barriers to its production. These states are able to take immediate advantage of the industrial hemp research

and pilot program provision, Section 7606 of the Farm Bill: California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia. In 2014, three states, Colorado, Kentucky, and Vermont, planted hemp research crops.

#

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.