

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 684 without my signature.

As I indicated last year, I appreciate and applaud the Legislature's interest in actually expanding California's economy; however, I am concerned about the impact of the particular type of expansion that is being proposed. I recognize and am proud of that fact that California is a national and world leader in the production of high-quality agricultural commodities. Our state has a rich agricultural environment and we must strive to protect and promote farming, ranching and agri-business in California, while preserving natural resources and protecting consumers.

Given these facts, I would like to support the expansion of a new agricultural commodity in this State. Unfortunately, I am very concerned that this bill would give legitimate growers a false sense of security and a belief that production of "industrial hemp" is somehow a legal activity under federal law.

Under federal law, all cannabis plants, regardless of variety or THC content, are simply considered to be "marijuana", which is a federally regulated controlled substance. Any person in the United States that wishes to grow cannabis plants for any purpose, including industrial purposes, must first obtain permission and register with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Failure to do so would be a violation of federal law and could subject an individual to criminal penalties.

In addition, California law enforcement has expressed concerns that implementation of this measure could place a drain on their resources and cause significant problems with drug enforcement activities. This is troubling given the needs in this state for the eradication and prevention of drug production.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger