

April 18, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rand Paul  
United States Senate  
167 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

Re: S. 2667 - The Hemp Farming Act of 2018

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Senator Rand Paul, Senator Ron Wyden, and Senator Jeff Merkley,

On behalf of Vote Hemp, the grassroots advocacy organization representing the hemp industry, American farmers and consumers, we strongly commend you on the introduction of S. 2667, the Hemp Farming Act of 2018. We very much appreciate your leadership and efforts to bring back commercial hemp farming, create jobs and spur economic development with this important crop.

Vote Hemp has been working to reform hemp policy at the state and federal level for more than 15 years and we are very pleased that this legislation is poised to achieve our primary goal of allowing American farmers to grow and profit from hemp once again.

Hemp has just begun to demonstrate its potential to create jobs, help lower the trade deficit and expand U.S. manufacturing. Much of economic impact from commercial hemp farming will help rural communities and support American agriculture. Vote Hemp estimates that \$810 million worth of hemp products were sold in the U.S. in 2017, including foods, body care products, dietary supplements, clothing, auto parts, building materials, and paper. Unfortunately, the majority of these products were made from imported hemp due to an outdated federal policy that limits commercial hemp farming and creates roadblocks to businesses seeking to grow, process or manufacture with hemp.

The hemp industry has already created new jobs thanks to Section 7606 of the 2014 Farm Bill, however, progress has been challenging due to the DEA and other federal and state regulators misinterpreting or outright ignoring the law. Farmers and businesses who

attempt to grow or process hemp currently face frustrating challenges including limited access to banking and capital, restrictions on access to water, inability to advertise and regulations which have been made access to seed genetics extremely difficult. This is keeping many farmers and businesses on the sidelines.

We believe that S. 2667 will remove the roadblocks and allow a robust domestic hemp industry to develop and flourish. We especially appreciate that S. 2667 allows states to regulate hemp farming and creates a more level playing field including support for research and crop insurance.

We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you to pass S. 2667 into law during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,



Eric Steenstra  
President