



Senator McConnell Introduces The Hemp Farming Act of 2018

The Hemp Farming Act of 2018 Strongly Poised to Pass Federal Legalization of Hemp Cultivation, Regulation and Commerce in 115th Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Vote Hemp, the nation's leading grassroots hemp advocacy organization working to change state and federal laws to allow commercial hemp farming, strongly supports the introduction and advancement of The Hemp Farming Act of 2018. Introduced on April 12, by Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), with strong support from Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), and further bi-partisan support from Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), the Hemp Farming Act of 2018, if passed, would remove federal roadblocks to the cultivation of industrial hemp, the non-drug agricultural varieties of *Cannabis*. The full text of the bill may be found at: <http://votehemp.com/hempfarmingbill>.

The Hemp Farming Act of 2018 would remove industrial hemp from Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, and allows it to be regulated as an agricultural crop. The bill places federal regulatory authority of hemp with USDA, requiring State departments of agriculture to file their hemp program plans with USDA and allows them to regulate hemp cultivation per their State specific programs. In addition to defining hemp as *Cannabis* that contains no more than 0.3% THC by dry weight, the bill asserts a 'whole plant' definition of hemp, including plant extracts. If passed, the bill would remove roadblocks to the rapidly growing hemp industry in the U.S., notably by authorizing and encouraging access to federal research funding for hemp, and remove restrictions on banking, water rights, and other regulatory barriers the hemp industry currently faces. The bill would also explicitly authorize crop insurance for hemp.

Furthermore, per Vote Hemp advocacy on the issue, The Hemp Farming Act of 2018 expands federally legal commercial hemp cultivation to tribal lands, reservations and U.S. territories—lands that had previously been omitted in Sec. 7606 of the Farm Bill, which allowed only for hemp farming programs in 'States.'

Senator McConnell said, "Today, with my colleagues, I am proud to introduce the bipartisan Hemp Farming Act of 2018, which will build upon the success of the hemp pilot programs and spur innovation and growth within the industry. By legalizing hemp and empowering states to conduct their own oversight plans, we can give the hemp industry the tools necessary to create jobs and new opportunities for farmers and manufacturers around the country."

"It is far past time for Congress to pass this commonsense, bipartisan legislation to end the outrageous anti-hemp, anti-farmer and anti-jobs stigma that's been codified into law and is holding back growth in American agriculture jobs and our economy at large," Senator Wyden said. "Hemp products are made in this country, sold in this country and consumed in this country. Senator McConnell, our colleagues and I are going to keep pushing to make sure that if Americans can buy hemp products at the local supermarket, American farmers can grow hemp in this country."

"We're grateful for the urgency that Senators McConnell, Wyden and Merkley are demonstrating on this issue. We are calling on Congress to pass this imperative legislation so that American farmers can finally engage in and benefit economically from the booming U.S. hemp industry," said Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp. "With strong bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate, Congress has a clear road to

passing the Industrial Hemp Farming Act, and we urge them to do so immediately, so that no further economic opportunity is lost to American farmers and manufacturers.”

Per hemp farming legislation set forth in the Farm Bill of 2014, 25,541 acres of industrial hemp were lawfully cultivated across 19 states in 2017.

To date, thirty-four 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: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.

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Vote Hemp is a national, single-issue, non-profit organization dedicated to the acceptance of and a free market for 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.