

September 6, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
2430 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson,

We greatly appreciate the time and effort being invested as you work together to synchronize a fair and just Farm Bill and are thrilled that Senator McConnell's dedication to supporting the hemp industry has culminated in the inclusion of the provisions of the Hemp Farming Act in the Senate version of the must-pass Farm Bill. Treating hemp as an agricultural commodity will bring much needed jobs and economic opportunity to rural America.

We are grateful for Senator McConnell's leadership and perseverance to see this legislative initiative succeed and we request your support for the Senate-passed Farm Bill's provisions to legalize hemp farming in the United States and establish a process for State and Tribal entities to develop and implement hemp production plans. We look forward to the day when federal law no longer stands in the way of the hemp industry realizing its full economic and job creation potential for the American people.

We are concerned, however, about a provision added during the Senate committee markup that would make any person ever convicted of a felony relating to a controlled substance under State or Federal law ineligible to participate in hemp production or programs. We respectfully ask that the drug felony ban be completely removed.

While we support the goal of ensuring the integrity of the workforce in the emerging hemp industry, we believe that a drug felony ban would not serve this goal. We believe that a drug-related conviction in a person's past should have no bearing on the integrity and lawful operation of a hemp business.

We are also concerned about the long-term impact that the felony ban could have on people who are trying to successfully return to society following a conviction. The felony ban would

only increase the risk of recidivism for people who are trying to find stable employment. People of color would also likely be disproportionately impacted by the felony ban, given the well documented racial disparities in drug law enforcement across the country.

We believe that citizens who have paid their debt to society should have an equal opportunity to benefit from this new industry. This is especially true in rural areas likely to benefit most from the emerging hemp industry where jobs are scarce.

Thank you for considering our perspectives as presented in this letter. We stand ready to help you and your staff ensure that the provisions of the Hemp Farming Act are included in the final Farm Bill when signed into law by President Trump.

Sincerely,

American Herbal Products Association
Bluebird Botanicals
Hemp Industries Association
National Hemp Association
Vote Hemp

Cc: House and Senate Farm Bill Conference Committee Members