

**Hemp in New Hampshire
Testimony Points
Thomas Murphy
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in support of HB 424**

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Tom Murphy. I am the National Outreach Coordinator of Vote Hemp. I am also a member of our Board of Directors. Vote Hemp is a single-issue nonprofit organization dedicated to the acceptance of and free market for industrial hemp and to changes in current law to allow U.S. farmers to grow low-THC industrial hemp. Vote Hemp recommends that the Committee vote "Ought to Pass" for HB 424.

Hemp farming is an agricultural issue and related issues are health, environment, and economic development. Hemp is a legitimate agricultural crop with many high quality food, fiber, and fuel products made from it. Health Canada statistics show that the number of acres of hemp cultivated in Canada showed an 820% increase from 1998-2006. Acreage more that doubled from 2005-2006. Most of the acreage was oilseed varieties, but some was fiber varieties.

I will mention the most common objection to hemp cultivation in the United States first - there are legitimate concerns that law enforcement may have with this and hemp bills in other states. These need to be addressed in a positive manner. In my opinion that has been done very well in HB 424, especially the provision for allowing transportation of certified hemp seed by license holders as well as the limits placed on flowers and leaves not entering the stream of commerce. This should alleviate the concerns of law enforcement regarding traffic stops as well as the need for a budget for testing in state labs.

In Canada hemp growers are licensed and their fields are registered with their GPS coordinates. Police can spot check these fields without notice, so surreptitiously growing high-THC varieties of *Cannabis* is not advised and can result in the loss of a hemp growing license. The provisions in HB 424 are quite similar and when properly enforced by the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture should more than satisfy any legitimate law enforcement concerns as they have in Canada and other countries.

HB 424 has a provision in it stating that the commissioner shall be the sole source and supplier of seed for use in industrial hemp production in the state. The state Department of Agriculture will most likely have a list of approved hemp varieties or cultivars. Health Canada puts out a list of approved varieties each year. The List of Approved Cultivars for the 2007 Growing Season is in your packets. It is printed on hemp.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) is now issuing licenses to farmers to grow hemp under existing state law and NDDA rules. I presented testimony in favor of these rules at a hearing in Bismarck last June. There were five new bills introduced in their House and Senate in 2007. Two of the five have been signed by Governor Hoeven. Two of the bills were resolutions urging Congress to recognize the multiple benefits of industrial hemp. The fifth bill has passed both the House and Senate with different amendments and has just come out of conference committee for its final floor votes.

Market research obtained by Vote Hemp shows that hemp food sales grew by at least 35% from August 2005 to August 2006. The sales data was collected by the market research firm SPINS, but under-represents actual sales due to the niche status of hemp foods. The previous SPINS report showed a 50% sales growth. The increase in growth of the hemp food market from 2003-2006 was 336%. Most of the Canadian hemp is grown for seed, which is manufactured into food and cosmetics. The latest issue of *Prevention* magazine called hemp "the latest heart superfood." The *TODAY* show called hemp "one of the hottest food trends for 2007."

My written testimony provides more information on industrial hemp, including some background information on hemp as it relates to U.S. and international law, resolutions passed by national bodies in support of permitting hemp growing in the U.S., and additional authoritative resources.

HB 424 is one of the best industrial hemp farming bills in the U.S. and should be considered a model bill for other states. Vote Hemp recommends that the Committee vote "Ought to Pass." I would be happy to answer questions from the Committee.