



Vote Hemp Achieves Inclusion of Pro-Hemp Farming Position in National Conference of State Legislatures Agriculture Policy

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, has successfully worked with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to secure the inclusion of a pro-hemp farming position in the conference's permanent agriculture policy. Passed on August 7, 2017, the new directive on hemp farming legislation asserts NCSL support for both federal and state regulations for industrial hemp cultivation in the U.S., and is the result of several years of Vote Hemp's advocacy on the issue. Specifically, the new NCSL policy directive reads:

"NCSL Supports federal legislation to define industrial hemp as a distinct agricultural crop (1 percent% or less THC content) and allow states to regulate commercial hemp farming. Currently 33 states have laws allowing hemp research or farming. NCSL believes that hemp has a long history as a sustainable and a profitable crop, and has great potential as a new crop for American agriculture and industry. According to Vote Hemp, an estimated \$687 million worth of hemp products were sold in the U.S. in 2016, including foods, body care products, clothing, auto parts, building materials, and paper. Most of these products were made from imported hemp due to federal policy that prohibits commercial hemp farming. NCSL believes that federal policies that obstruct industrial hemp farming are outdated and must be changed."

Passed by a unanimous vote among NCSL members, this inclusion of hemp farming support in the organization's agriculture policy marks an important shift among states toward lifting prohibition on the crop, and implementing regulations for its commercial cultivation at the state level. Vote Hemp would like to expressly thank Hawaii State Representative Cynthia Thielen, and Hawaii State Senator Mike Gabbard, who helped draft the language of the directive and secure support for its passage; as well as Maryland State Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, who presented the resolution to the NCSL Agriculture Policy Committee, and was key to its unanimous ratification.

"We are grateful to the National Conference of State Legislatures for their unequivocal support for hemp farming legislation," said Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp. "The unanimous inclusion of this directive in their agriculture policy demonstrates that NCSL understands the need for legislative reform to legalize hemp farming, and recognizes its potential as a sustainable and profitable crop for American farmers," Steenstra continued.

This strong demonstration of NCSL support for hemp farming legalization at the state and federal levels occurs at a propitious time, as the Industrial Hemp Farming Act H.R. 3530 was just recently introduced in Congress July 28, 2017, and is well poised to lift prohibition on hemp farming in the United States in the 115th Congress. According to Vote Hemp, an estimated \$687 million worth of hemp products were sold in the U.S. in 2016, including foods, body care products, clothing, auto parts, building materials, and paper. Most of these products were made from imported hemp due to federal policy that prohibits commercial hemp farming.

To date, thirty-three 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: 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.