

Chairman Rahjes and Committee Members,

I want to first thank you for your continued dedication to serving our great state, and ongoing support of the industrial hemp program you first enacted in 2018. As an appointed member of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Industrial Hemp Advisory Board since the program's inception, I am truly honored to be helping support and empower this emerging industry. To this end, I wish to present a few questions with the proposed legislation for the committee to consider. This position is neutral due to the fact it is necessary to update the state's seed provisions to include hemp as well as codify the advisory board. At the same time, there are some fundamental changes representatives from the industry would like to be considered in the spirit of achieving the true intent of the legislature.

- On page one, Section 1(c), it is unclear why Kansas Bureau of Investigation needs to be involved with seed testing or data. Furthermore, it is ambiguous how the phrase "upon request" is to be interpreted. For example, if there is a system already in place this could simply mean querying a database similar to how USDA already provides hemp testing data exclusively to law enforcement in a system that is not available to the public.

My understanding, based on a January 14th zoom conversation with USDA Hemp Program Director Bill Richmond, is that a common misconception stems from the need for law enforcement involvement with regards to hemp. Under the 2018 Farm Bill and finalized hemp rules and regulations, the only time law enforcement needs to be notified is if there is a severe violation deemed outside the established USDA culpability and negligence thresholds of the program. It is also worth mentioning Mr. Richmond was clear that Kansas is one of the strictest out of any state, but given the fact our state was the first in America to implement a hemp eradication program it is not too surprising. (I am happy to share more information on this upon request.)

At the same time, with the federally approved Kansas Department of Agriculture's final commercial rules & regulations, remediation options now prevent from total destruction of a crop so the overall likelihood of needing law enforcement involvement is lower than before. It is important to remember that genetically speaking hemp is not marijuana, it cannot "turn into marijuana" by going hot or above the 0.3% THC limit, and state agencies must learn to differentiate and treat cannabis this way. I hear from farmers often that what is preventing commercial hemp from taking off is it needs to be treated like other crops such as soybeans, wheat and corn. The USDA agrees, so we need our state agencies to accomplish this in practice.

- On page nineteen, Section 15 (2) and (4), there are two definitions impacted by changes in updated language from a new amended version of HB2244, which just recently came out of the revisor's office.

Ultimately, we ask the legislature to come to terms with what the true intent of the legislature is: Abandon hemp altogether and go backwards making it illegal again, or keep the trajectory that's been set forth by two legislatures, two governors and the will of the people. We hope you agree it needs to be in statute that the state allows all products and goods which can be made from hemp to be sold. Thank you again for your focus on this crucial area for farmers and communities across the state. I am happy to provide information, anytime.

- Kelly Rippel

Co-Founder, Kansans for Hemp

Founding President, Planted Association of Kansas