



NIHC
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL
HEMP COUNCIL



August 5, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable John Hoeven
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Sanford Bishop

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Kay Granger
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members of Agriculture Appropriations:

We are writing to express support for the inclusion of a provision to extend the hemp pilot program through fiscal year 2021 in the next supplemental appropriations bill. As organizations whose members are involved in the regulation, production, and processing of industrial hemp, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and the National Industrial Hemp Council (NIHC) remain concerned about the impending expiry of the hemp pilot program on October 31, 2020. We were pleased to see the provision extending the pilot program included in the recent House Agriculture Appropriations bill. However, the annual appropriations bills may not be completed before the extension is vitally needed.

For the past year, state departments of agriculture have worked tirelessly to bring their individual state's hemp programs in compliance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Interim Final Rule (IFR) published on October 31, 2019.¹ Many states were able to transition from their hemp pilot programs to a USDA state approved plan. Notwithstanding this progress, many states will be unable to meet the forthcoming deadline of October 31, 2020. These states have cited that due to the unprecedented national COVID-19 pandemic, state regulators have been unable to work with their state legislatures to acquire necessary statutory amendments.

We appreciate the tremendous amount of work that USDA put into the development of the regulatory scheme for hemp farming. However, without an extension of the pilot program deadline, hemp farmers will be left in a perilous situation through no fault of their own.

Thank you for considering our request. Both the NIHC and NASDA look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Patrick Atagi
Board Chairman
National Industrial Hemp Council

Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
NASDA

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/10/31/2019-23749/establishment-of-a-domestic-hemp-production-program>