

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: U.S. hemp farmers and rebuilding the economy

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for the tremendous job in leading our nation and especially for your work to support farmers, including the 2018 Farm Bill that legalized commercial hemp farming once again.

We write to share our deep sense of commitment to playing a role in rebuilding the economy post-COVID-19. As you've often mentioned, the U.S. economy was the strongest it had ever been before the pandemic struck. The undersigned U.S. hemp producers stand ready to help rebuild our nation's economy and make it even stronger.

The domestic hemp production industry is barely 1 year old, and the projected numbers on what our nascent industry can produce are impressive. Domestic hemp production was not allowed until 2014 and then operated under limited pilot programs. The 2018 U.S. Farm Bill fully legalized commercial hemp production, thus, our contribution to the economy has yet to be realized.

As of January 2020, 47 states have hemp production programs and there were more than 17,000 licensed hemp producers during the 2019 growing season. U.S. domestic hemp production has increased dramatically since the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill: 25.5k acres in 2017¹; 78k acres in 2018; and 511,442 acres in 2019. The hemp crop has thousands of end-uses from fiber and textile to food and healthy lifestyle products. According to the Hemp Business Journal, U.S. sales of hemp products reached \$820 million in 2018 and are projected to reach \$2.6 billion by 2022.

There are still market uncertainties for our nascent industry, and it is critical to open end markets for our crops. The Administration could play a crucial role by resolving the regulatory barrier created by FDA that has prevented FDA from recognizing cannabidiol (CBD) as a legitimate botanical ingredient for use in food and dietary supplement products. Any support for a legislative solution in removing this regulatory burden would be sincerely appreciated.

¹ Congressional Research Service, *Hemp as an Agricultural Commodity*, 22.Jun.2018.

Our industry is young and shows great promise. Seeds have already begun to go into the ground for the 2020 harvest. We stand ready to help rebuild our economy.

Thank you.

If interested in connecting with any of the below groups, please ring Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp, 703.615.3666.

Kentucky Hemp Industries Association – Tate Hall, President
Midwest Hemp Council – Justin Swanson, President
Minnesota Industrial Hemp Association – Dave Ladd, President
Missouri Hemp Trade Association – Kent Gaines, President
North Carolina Industrial Hemp Association – Blake Butler, Executive Director
Virginia Hemp Coalition – Jason Amatucci, President
Vote Hemp – Eric Steenstra, President

cc: Vice President of the United States Mike Pence
Mark Meadows, Chief of Staff, President of the United States
Marc Short, Chief of Staff, Vice President of the United States
Congressman Colin Peterson, Chair House Committee on Agriculture
Congressman K. Michael Conaway, Ranking Member House Committee on Agriculture
Senator Marco Rubio, Chairman Senate Committee on Small Business &
Entrepreneurship
Senator Ben Cardin, Ranking Member Senate Committee on Small Business &
Entrepreneurship
Senator Pat Roberts, Chairman Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry
Senator Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, & Forestry
Senator Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Charles E. Schumer, Senate Minority Leader