

U.S. Hemp Roundtable

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Senate Bill 57

Proponent Testimony

House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

April 30, 2019

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Smith, Ranking Member Brent and members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee:

My name is Joe Ewig and I am here on behalf our client, the U.S. Hemp Roundtable, who strongly endorse passage of Senate Bill 57.

The U.S. Hemp Roundtable is the nation's leading business trade association of the hemp industry, representing more than 60 companies and organizations that feature participants in all parts of the emerging U.S. hemp industry, from seed to sale, as well as all of the leading grassroots organizations within the space. The Roundtable's primary mission is to advocate for complete legalization of hemp and hemp products at all levels of government.

The Roundtable worked with Members of Congress and the U.S. Senate to help secure passage of the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill last December, which ended the federal prohibition on hemp and permanently removed the crop from the purview of the Controlled Substances Act, designating it once and for all as an agricultural commodity. We have also worked closely with legislative leaders in many of the 41 states that have in recent years legalized hemp and hemp products within their jurisdictions.

Senate Bill 57 would finally permit hemp farmers in Ohio participate in the exciting and profitable new industry. It would also allow Ohio to become compliant with the permanent hemp program regime permitted by the 2018 Farm Bill by:

- Adjusting to the new, broader definition of "hemp";
- Developing procedures to design a state hemp program and secure approval by the USDA; and
- Providing for enforcement penalties and the opportunity for corrective actions as outlined in the new federal legislation

Furthermore, Senate Bill 57 provides a funding mechanism that allows the Ohio Department of Agriculture to pay for administration through user fees, as opposed to relying on scarce taxpayer dollars.

Finally and importantly, the model legislation would also provide state legal protection for the sale of hemp products that are permitted under the new federal law that offer the most

profitable economic opportunities for U.S. farmers. This includes cannabidiol (“CBD”) products but only those that are derived from hemp and that contain less than 0.3% THC, the intoxicating compound found in much higher concentrations in marijuana.

The issue of hemp-derived CBD sales in Ohio has encountered recent controversy when last year, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy, declared that such products could only be sold in marijuana dispensaries. Senate Bill 57 would remove hemp products from the Board of Pharmacy’s jurisdiction and ensure that they could be sold safely and effectively to a growing consumer market.

Senate Bill 57 passed out of Senate Agriculture Committee and the Ohio Senate with unanimous support and we urge your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Roundtable’s support and I’d be happy to answer any questions.