



Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

March 5, 2019

Senate Bill 57 | Sponsor Testimony

Senator Brian D. Hill

Chairman Hoagland, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 57. This bill will create an industrial hemp program in Ohio housed under the Department of Agriculture and will clarify that hemp and hemp-derived products, including CBD, may be sold legally in Ohio.

For millennia, Hemp has been used by most cultures for four main uses: food, fuel, fiber, and medicine. I plan to discuss the food, fuel, and fiber aspects while leaving the medicine portion for my joint sponsor, the good doctor, Senator Huffman, as seems fit.

Many people may not be aware, but hemp has a long history in America. The first two drafts, including the one ratified, of the Declaration of Independence was written using paper made from hemp. The sails and cordage used on the earliest ships sailing to America were made from hemp. The first American flags were hemp. It is claimed that under the umbrella of "food, fuel, fiber, and medicine," hemp is used to produce over 25,000 products. Just centuries ago, Italians referred to it as the "substance of a hundred operations" (*quello delle cento operazioni*).

Hemp can grow nearly anywhere in most climates. It requires little to no pesticides and pulls pollutants such as lead and phosphorous out the soil. The seeds can be turned to seed meal/cake or eaten whole as a food source. The fiber can be used in twine, caulking, auto bodies, building material, concrete ("hempcrete"), plastic composites, cordage, textiles, paper, and household goods. As a paper product, one acre of hemp can produce as much as 4-10 acres of trees over a 20 year cycle, while only taking 4 month to mature, whereas trees can require decades. Hemp paper is also higher quality and does not yellow, crack or deteriorate, while requiring fewer chemicals to process than trees.

Hemp was a leading cash crop in the US up until the 20th century, when confusion over the intoxicating properties of certain strains of cannabis and the benign properties of hemp strains of cannabis led to its prohibition a few decades later. This is where we find

ourselves today with a prohibited, harmless, but very useful plant that farmers are unable to grow.

With the recent passing of the 2018 Federal Farm Bill, industrial hemp has been removed from the list of scheduled substances banned by the federal government and can now be grown as a commodity crop throughout the US. During the past several years, while Congress worked to change hemp's legal status, many states adopted hemp pilot programs permitted by federal law so that farmers in their jurisdictions could begin planting and harvesting hemp and so hemp products could be processed for the market.

Ohio is now one of only a handful of states that has not passed legislation to address hemp's change in legal status. It is imperative that Ohio moves quickly so that our farmers can take advantage of a domestic hemp marketplace and catch up with our neighboring states. This legislation will allow for the growth, processing, sale, and research of hemp and hemp-made products and the potential benefits for all Ohioans. Thank you for your consideration.