

Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Hill, Ranking Member O'Brien, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee: thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony today on Senate Bill 57.

Today, and with the passage of Senate Bill 57, the State of Ohio will partially right a wrong written into law over 80 years ago and which has all that time prevented the significant economic and environmental benefits of the agricultural production of *Cannabis sativa*, commonly known as hemp.

Let's be clear: hemp is not marijuana, so says the Congress and the President of the United States, when they signed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, also known as the Farm Bill, into law December 20, 2018. Under Subtitle G, Hemp Production, the Farm Bill defines hemp to mean:

“the plant *Cannabis sativa* L. and any part of that plant, including the seeds thereof and all derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts, and salts of isomers, whether growing or not, with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol [also known as THC] concentration of not more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis.”

Further, the Farm Bill goes on to explicitly and unambiguously remove hemp from Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, effective immediately upon signing of the Farm Bill, as well as to make unequivocally clear that neither states nor tribes can prohibit interstate commerce involving hemp; the legislation also provides a roadmap for how states and tribes can establish programs to allow farmers to cultivate hemp in agricultural production. Ohio Senate Bill 57 likewise defines and decriminalizes hemp and allows for the establishment of a hemp cultivation program in Ohio.

Why this interest?

- Because farmers deserve a choice in deciding which agricultural commodities they will grow on their own land, especially given the significant economic potential and environmental benefits of hemp.
- Because citizens and patients deserve a choice in deciding what substances they take into their bodies and for what reasons, especially when considering potential alternatives to opioids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and other pharmaceuticals and their often dangerous side effects. Ohio was right to legalize medical marijuana, and Ohio is right now in legalizing hemp.
- Because there are over 26,000 industrial uses for hemp.
- Because hemp sales last year hit \$1 billion in CBD Oil, Personal Care Products, Industrial Uses, Food, and Textiles.
- Because analysts project hemp with \$20 billion in revenues by 2022.
- And not quite last, because 44 other U.S. states have already acted to allow hemp production or have pro-hemp legislation pending.

We must act with focus and vigor, beginning with the passage of Senate Bill 57, to facilitate commerce and production of hemp in Ohio or risk being completely sidelined by other more pro-active states in this new and exciting agricultural market. Thank you for your time.