

10 February 2015

Dear Senators Eken and Petersen,

I write to support SF618, a bill to authorize industrial hemp research in accordance with the federal Agricultural Act of 2014.

The University of Minnesota and my laboratory have maintained a Schedule 1 Controlled Substance registration for research on *Cannabis* since 2002. The definition of “marihuana” in the federal Controlled Substances Act has severely constrained our research. The federal Agricultural Act of 2014 improves the situation by defining hemp according to a level of drug content that is distinct from marijuana.

Minnesota has an opportunity to develop an agricultural product that would satisfy expanding domestic demand for hemp seed oil and fiber. At present, these demands are met by foreign importation exclusively.

I would like to answer five arguments against hemp legislation. These include: (1) hemp as subterfuge, (2) hemp as a threat to health and safety, (3) hemp as a noxious weed, (4) the cost to law enforcement, and (5) the hemp industry is too small to justify a risk to public safety.

The first argument is flawed because marijuana is spoiled when cultivated in the presence of hemp, as noted by the Canadian Royal Mounted Police. It is not feasible for marijuana growers to disguise their crop in a state-registered hemp field.

The second argument rests on the inaccurate definition of marijuana in the Controlled Substances Act. Failure to exclude hemp from the definition of an illegal drug encourages youth to seek out and smoke hemp. Any fool who performs this experiment is immediately taught the difference.

Hemp was removed from the noxious weed list by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in 2011. A 2010 MDA report noted that the species is neither highly invasive nor a priority for eradication.

The fourth argument has merit that can be addressed through hemp agricultural policy. For example, requiring the registration of hemp cultivation, processing, and distribution with authorities has been effective at isolating the hemp industry from the drug trade in Canada.

The expansion of the American hemp industry continues to outpace predictions of its critics. Furthermore, as noted by the California State Police Association, excluding hemp from the definition of “marihuana” can improve public safety by focusing law enforcement on drug interdiction.

Documents supporting these arguments are available upon request. The opinions I have expressed here are based on my professional expertise and do not represent an official University position.

Sincerely,



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