



*It is time to do what is right for the future of Virginia.*

## **Support House Bill 1277 The Virginia Industrial Hemp Farming Act**

### ***Hemp farming in Virginia will:***

- Create new agriculture, textile, manufacturing, and transportation jobs here by producing Virginia grown hemp and help create sustainable industry growth.
- Enable farmers the choice and advantage to invest in new opportunities to grow a versatile, profitable, and resilient Virginia heirloom crop.
- Remove harmful federal regulations and return power to states as a Constitutional consideration.
- Supporting HB1277 will help insure that Virginia's universities and agricultural departments can study industrial hemp for its possible future use as a commercial product and build to be a front-runner in research, innovation and potential profit.

### ***Virginia is poised to become a leader in the Global Industrial Hemp Market, here is why:***

- Ranked #4 in Forbes Best State for Businesses and Careers Report, 2014
- International export through the Port of Virginia, Washington Dulles International Airport
- Two of the nation's largest railroads operate in Virginia
- 6% corporate income tax rate has not been increased since 1972
- Virginia can reach 50% of the U.S. population via UPS distribution within two days

In 1619, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed legislation requiring every farmer to grow hemp. In 1999 and 2001 the Virginia legislature passed supportive resolutions calling for a revised federal hemp policy. There is already clear support in our state for industrial hemp.

***"As long as it's for industrial use and is closely monitored, it may be a help to the economy. We don't view it as an issue that we want to oppose."*** -John W. Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Sheriffs' Association

***"I'm a huge fan of hemp. I think we should quit calling it hemp and just call it the best plant ever."*** -Joel Salatin, Polyface farm, Swoope, Virginia

### **Virginia Industrial Hemp Coalition**

The Virginia Industrial Hemp Coalition (VIHC) is a grassroots driven advocacy organization whose aims are to create legislation that will enable the legal cultivation of one of the world's most versatile and valuable natural resources, Industrial Hemp in the Commonwealth of Virginia.



## Support House Bill #1277 the Virginia Industrial Hemp Farming Act

Last year, sweeping federal policy reform removed significant roadblocks to the U.S. hemp industry. Section 7606 of the Farm Bill, also known as The Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp Research amendment, defines industrial hemp and authorizes research and pilot programs in states that have legalized the crop. The 2014 Commerce, Justice and Sciences (CJS) appropriations bill also included an historic amendment prohibiting the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) from spending funds "in contravention of Section 7606" of the 2014 Farm Bill.

### ***What is House Bill #1277?***

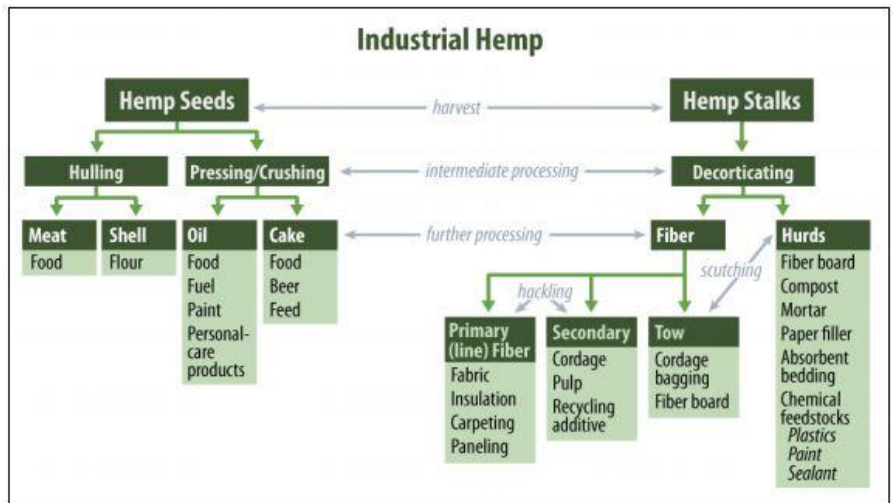
*House Bill 1277: the Virginia Industrial Hemp Farming Act* will take immediate advantage of the federal industrial hemp research and pilot program provision and license private production of industrial hemp in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Industrial Hemp, the non-psychoactive cousin of marijuana, is a variety of cannabis which contains 0.3% or less of the psychoactive component THC (Marijuana plants typically contain 5%-20% THC). Hemp is a material that is as practical, useful and sustainable as almost anything in the world, touted to

produce a variety of over 25,000 commercial products including food, textiles, building materials, and biofuels; none of which can be used as an illegal drug. Hemp removes CO<sub>2</sub> from our atmosphere, remediates the soil and can be grown without the use of pesticides.

Annual retail sales in 2013 for legally imported hemp products was estimated at \$581 million in the United States by the Hemp Industries Association. In Canada alone, the domestic hemp industry is valued at over \$1 billion dollars.

Major organizations including the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Farmers Union, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, and the Virginia Farm Bureau currently endorse hemp farming.



Source: Congressional Research Service