

FW: HB 156 Hemp

Rep. Grier Hopkins <Rep.Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov>

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To: Joe G. Hardenbrook <Joe.Hardenbrook@akleg.gov>

From: pacllama <haynes@mtaonline.net>

Sent: Thursday, April 1, 2021 3:24 PM

To: Rep. Grier Hopkins <Rep.Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov>

Subject: HB 156 Hemp

Ember Haynes

PO Box 885

Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

Dear Representative Grier ,

My husband and I are currently registered Hemp growers in the Alaska hemp program.

We are in the planning stages for our second year of growing, harvesting and learning about growing hemp in Alaska.

Since 2015 when Senator Ellis first introduced his hemp bill, I have been an advocate for the small acreage grower to be considered when finalizing hemp regulations.

When truly treated as an agricultural crop, hemp is a sustainable addition to large farms and small scale growers alike. There is way more to hemp than creating a CBD product, and I know more people would be encouraged to participate in the hemp program if there was more consideration given to growing for animal feed and fodder.

I am writing in support of HB 156.

I encourage you to regulate hemp in a manner friendly to farmers of all acreage sizes and methods. We grow hemp as a sustainable addition to our regenerative farming practices, to create products and feed our animals. Onerous fees make it difficult for small crop growers like myself and many of my neighbors to achieve our goals. Currently the fees are keeping me from turning my small hemp crop of last year into a marketable product. I have been contacted by

several neighbors who have ample space and would like to grow hemp to feed their animals and improve their land, but the testing fees make it difficult to grow hemp in such a manner.

For the last 6 years I have asked for the small scale grower to be considered in the Alaska hemp program.

The current legislation is geared more towards a cannabinoid market product, leaving out traditional hemp farming and those who are using simple methods to create and “manufacture” true hemp products as an agricultural product.

There is room in the Alaska hemp industry for those who want to grow, manufacture and sell on a large scale and those who are looking to incorporate hemp as a beneficial source of feed and protein for their small farm.

Imagine if only those in the certified potatoes program were allowed to grow the crop, and home gardeners were unable to grow and use their own potato crop?

There are Alaskan farmers who would like to use hemp as a rotation crop, cover crop, soil remediator and animal feed; but the testing requirements and fees are too onerous for them to do so.

I understand this is an Industrial program, but I also know that the ag industry covers the range from niche market to large sale farming. We represent the small acreage farmers whose intent is to incorporate hemp as a sustainable agricultural crop to provide food and nutrition and the overall improvement of our land. I am contacted regularly by local land owners who would like to grow hemp as a source of feed for their animals or use as a rotating crop or simply green manure, but the current fees and testing requirements make this idea cost prohibitive.

It would be very helpful if the language of the regulations were broadened to include a license for those who are not manufacturing a CBD or cannabinoid focused product, but do intend for animal and human use or consumption. There are so many ways that registered growers and processors could be utilizing hemp in all of its growth stages and many forms that are not currently allowed (or cost prohibitive), which in turn would cause the hemp industry to grow and include more Alaskans growing and processing hemp....which will grow the Industry!

I am an advocate for sustainable agriculture, food security and the growing of hemp as an agricultural crop.

For the last 13 years I have been legally importing hemp seed oil to use in the natural products I create for our business.

My husband and I began our second business Denali Hemp Company in 2014 as a way to educate Alaskans on the many benefits of hemp seed oil and the possibility of

products created with hemp grown in Alaska. Our balms and soaps were even passed out on the senate floor by Sen. Ellis as examples of what could be made out of Alaskan hemp.

The term "Industrial" Hemp seems to bring to mind large factories and big Industry.

Hemp is indeed an Agricultural crop...but that doesn't mean it HAS to be grown in huge quantities and immediately support a large-scale industry full of ready-

to-go factories and billion dollar contracts.

We believe the "Industrial Hemp" movement is and will be propelled by smaller Grassroots producers.

Producers and production facilities do not have to be "large" to be successful...they just need to be able to grow and harvest their hemp crops without onerous fees.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. As a small producer I realize I am up against the battle of big Ag, and just ask for the fair opportunity to help create a successful hemp industry in Alaska.

Ember Haynes

Denali Hemp Company

Talkeetna, Alaska