



# It's Time to Grow

[www.HempHistoryWeek.com](http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 2, 2014

**CONTACT:** Lauren Stansbury, 402-540-1208  
[lauren@votehemp.com](mailto:lauren@votehemp.com)  
Ryan Fletcher, 202-641-0277  
[ryan@votehemp.com](mailto:ryan@votehemp.com)

## ***Hemp History Week* Launches as Historic Hemp Research and Development Crops Sprout in U.S. Soil After Decades of Prohibition**

***1,400 Events Occur Nationwide June 2-8, as Farmers, Manufacturers, Environmentalists & Sustainable Businesses Lead Grassroots Education Events to Raise Awareness on the Benefits of Hemp***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The fifth annual *Hemp History Week* (June 2-8, 2014) began today, featuring events and activities throughout all 50 states this week, to raise awareness on the environmental, economic and health benefits of industrial hemp. Organized by the Hemp Industries Association (HIA) and Vote Hemp, the nation's leading advocacy group for industrial hemp farming legalization—*Hemp History Week* is comprised of over 1,400 events this year, including documentary film screenings, a retail program, restaurant events, hemp plantings, and a call to action for a national week of lobbying legislators and representatives at both the State and Federal level to support the legalization of industrial hemp for commercial farming.

2014 has been a momentous year for the hemp legalization effort: February 7 marked the federal approval of hemp research and development pilot programs in states that have legalized the crop, per the passage of Sec. 7606 "Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp" in the Farm Bill. Just last week, on Thursday May 29, the House passed two amendments to the CJS appropriations bill, to preclude the DEA from interfering with hemp farming in states that have passed legislation legalizing hemp. HIA estimates for the total retail market for hemp in the U.S. in 2013 exceeded \$581 million and sales of hemp food and body care products grew by 24% over the previous year to \$184 million. Planting of hemp for pilot programs are currently underway in both Colorado and Kentucky. And the Industrial Hemp Farming Acts, S. 359 and H.R. 525 respectively, have gained significant support since their introduction in 2013, bringing the total number of cosponsors to 4 in the Senate, and 49 in the House. Given this unprecedented momentum and progress made toward revitalizing the hemp industry this year, the theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual *Hemp History Week* is "It's Time to Grow."

In Colorado thus far, farmers have been licensed to plant over 1,000 acres with hemp. In Kentucky, hemp pilot programs conducted by Kentucky academic institutions in conjunction with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) are underway, despite the interference of the Drug Enforcement Administration in mid-May when DEA attempted to withhold certified hemp seed imported by KDA for the state's inaugural hemp plantings.

"This is a crucial time in the movement to bring hemp farming back to the United States. Through the pilot programs in Colorado and Kentucky, we're regaining the knowledge of how to best grow the crop, how to process it, develop the infrastructure needed for manufacturing, and collecting data on the booming hemp market to prepare farmers and businesses for the commercial hemp industry poised to take off in the U.S.," says Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp. "We're also putting current hemp legislation to the test and challenging

the now bygone era of hemp prohibition, as the Drug Enforcement Administration has unsuccessfully attempted to block hemp cultivation in Kentucky. Not only will this spring determine much needed agronomic and economic knowledge about hemp farming in the U.S., it will ultimately prove the legitimacy of industrial hemp as a bona fide crop subject to regulation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, not the DEA. “

A list of the 1,400 *Hemp History Week* events taking place around the country is available on the event calendar on the *Hemp History Week* website: [www.HempHistoryWeek.com/events/find-an-event-near-you/](http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com/events/find-an-event-near-you/). More information and an informative promotional video for the campaign are available at: [www.HempHistoryWeek.com](http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com).

### **Letter-Writing Campaign & Grassroots Lobbying**

A primary objective of *Hemp History Week* is to advocate for federal policy change, while sending a strong, positive message to President Obama and Congress to end the ban on hemp farming and let U.S. farmers grow the versatile and profitable crop once again. The campaign will conduct outreach to encourage the public to write their representatives and sign an online petition to change current federal law restricting the cultivation of industrial hemp, which can be accessed via the *Hemp History Week* Web site’s Take Action page at: [www.HempHistoryWeek.com/about/take-action](http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com/about/take-action).

H.R. 525 and S. 359, also referred to as the Industrial Hemp Farming Acts, have been introduced in both the House and Senate, respectively, and many members of Congress currently support the legislation in favor of a federal policy change. If passed, the bills would remove federal restrictions on the domestic commercial cultivation of industrial hemp, defined as the non-drug oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis*. The full text of the bills, as well as status and co-sponsors, can be found at: [www.VoteHemp.com/legislation](http://www.VoteHemp.com/legislation).

During *Hemp History Week*, Congressional legislators will be in their home states and districts, on recess from Capitol Hill. Hemp activists and constituents across the country will meet with their representatives to make the case for hemp legalization.

For more information about how to lobby your representatives in support of industrial hemp legalization, including relevant talking points and tactics, see the toolkit on the *Hemp History Week* Web site at: [www.HempHistoryWeek.com/events/event-toolkit](http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com/events/event-toolkit).

### **Spring Plantings**

With licenses to grow industrial hemp being issued in states that have legalized hemp farming, including Colorado and Kentucky, *Hemp History Week* will be celebrated this year by a number of spring hemp plantings. While the hemp amendment to the recent Farm Bill limits hemp cultivation federally to research and development pilot programs via state agriculture departments and academic institutions, sowing hemp this spring marks a monumental moment in hemp history and heralds the dawn of a revived hemp industry in the U.S.

### **Industry-Wide Effort**

Now in its fifth year, *Hemp History Week* is an industry-wide effort made possible by the support of leading natural product brands that are known for manufacturing the highest-quality hemp products. Hemp can be used in a wide variety of products and applications, including food, cosmetics, textiles and clothing, building materials, sustainable packaging, bio-composites, fuel, auto parts and more. Sponsors of *Hemp History Week* 2014 are comprised of leaders in the North American hemp market, including Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps, Himalania, Living Harvest Foods, Manitoba Harvest, Nature’s Path Foods and Nutiva. Supporting sponsors of

*Hemp History Week* include Hemp Technologies, and Doug Fine, author of the new book “Hemp Bound,” published by Chelsea Green Publishing.

### **Celebrity Endorsements**

*Hemp History Week* is endorsed by a long list of celebrities and high-profile wellness experts, including Dr. Andrew Weil, Alicia Silverstone, Phil Lempert, Ashley Koff, R.D., Brendan Brazier, Elizabeth Kucinich, Ziggy Marley, Alexandra Jamieson, Dar Williams, Michael Franti, John Salley, John Trudell, Kevin Danaher and the Grammy award-winning band Ozomatli.

### **Grassroots Events**

This year’s campaign will include over 300 grassroots events nationwide, including events at farmers’ markets and street fairs, retail store events, film screenings, lobbying, hemp planting events, educational forums for farmers, and more. Specific details about these grassroots events can be found on the *Hemp History Week* web site.

### **Documentary Film Screenings**

*Bringing It Home*, an award-winning, hour-long documentary film about industrial hemp, explores the question of why a crop with so many widespread benefits cannot be farmed in the U.S. today. The film recounts the history of hemp, its myriad industrial applications and current legalization efforts. Through an audience engagement tour comprised of more than 50 screenings, the documentary aims to magnify dialogue about hemp in order to facilitate America’s transition to a more informed, sustainable and healthy future. The film will be screened in conjunction with *Hemp History Week* this year alongside events in cities and towns across the country. For more information about the film, please visit: [www.bringingithomemovie.com](http://www.bringingithomemovie.com).

### **Retail Promotions**

Promotions and in-store events highlighting the benefits of hemp will occur in hundreds of natural product retail outlets across the county. Hemp product promotions will happen in more than 1,100 participating retail stores, including most Whole Foods Market locations in the U.S.

### **National Restaurant Program**

Building off the success of the 2013 national restaurant program, this year *Hemp History Week* has invited health-conscious cafes and restaurants around the country to feature hemp-infused dishes on their menus during the week of the campaign. Some restaurants will also host special *Hemp History Week* events.

### **Showcasing the Health Benefits of Hemp**

A renewable resource offering a long list of health and nutritional benefits, hemp is one of the fastest-growing product categories in the natural foods industry. Hemp seed is a rich source of omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids (EFAs), providing both SDA and GLA, highly-digestible protein, and naturally-occurring vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E and iron, while also being a good source of dietary fiber. Hemp seed is a near complete protein, containing all ten essential amino acids, with no enzyme inhibitors, making it easily digestible by the human body. Hemp seed is also gluten-free and has no known allergens.

### **Legislative Progress**

To date, thirty-three states and Puerto Rico have introduced pro-hemp legislation and twenty-two have passed pro-hemp legislation, while fifteen states (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia) have defined industrial hemp as distinct and removed barriers to its production. However, despite state authorization to grow hemp, farmers in those states still risk raids by federal agents if they plant the crop, due to the failure of federal policy to distinguish oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis* (i.e., industrial hemp) from psychoactive varieties (i.e., marijuana).

So far in the 2014 legislative session, industrial hemp legislation has been introduced or carried over in Puerto Rico and twenty-five states: Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois (carried over from 2013), Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire (carried over from 2013), New Jersey (carried over from 2013), New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington (two bills carried over from 2013), West Virginia and Wisconsin. Three state bills have passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature (Illinois, Missouri and South Carolina). For current and complete information regarding state industrial hemp legislation, please visit: [www.VoteHemp.com/state.html](http://www.VoteHemp.com/state.html).

# # #

*Hemp History Week, June 2–8, 2014, is an industry-wide initiative of the Hemp Industries Association (HIA) and Vote Hemp. The HIA is a non-profit trade group representing hemp companies, researchers, farmers and supporters. Vote Hemp is a national, single-issue, non-profit advocacy group founded in 2000 by members of the hemp industry to remove barriers to industrial hemp farming in the U.S. through education, legislation and advocacy. For further information, please visit: [www.TheHIA.org](http://www.TheHIA.org) and [www.VoteHemp.com](http://www.VoteHemp.com).*