



October 6, 2020

Randy Romanski, Secretary-designee  
Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection  
2811 Agriculture Drive  
Madison, WI 53708-8911

Dear Secretary-designee Romanski:

On October 1, 2020, President Trump signed into law H.R. 8337, the “Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extension Act”. Not only does this law provide appropriations for Federal agencies through December 11, 2020, but as you know it also includes a very important provision that can greatly benefit the hemp industry for the next year.

Your department is keenly aware of the multitude of actions that have surrounded the issue of hemp since the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill and the subsequent 2018 Farm Bill, not least of which is the encroaching expiration of federal code that authorizes states to establish a “hemp pilot program”. While Wisconsin is currently operating under the pilot program, it is set to expire on October 31 and is to be replaced by a state hemp plan that is sanctioned by the 2018 Farm Bill and 2019 WI Act 68, and pending approval by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Federal provisions governing the hemp pilot program that were set to expire at the end of this month have now been extended to September 30, 2021. The law recently signed by the President includes Section 122 which states:

*Section 7605(b) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (7 U.S.C. 5940 note; Public Law 115–334) is amended by striking “the date that is 1 year after the date on which the Secretary establishes a plan under section 297C of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946” and inserting “September 30, 2021”.*

In light of this, we respectfully ask that you take full advantage of this opportunity and immediately begin drafting emergency rules to extend Wisconsin’s pilot program through next year’s growing season and delay the implementation of the state hemp plan. We firmly believe you have the legal authority to act. As the administrator of the state hemp program, and per WI Stat 94.55, we also believe it is incumbent upon you to act and utilize this extension to maximize

opportunities for individuals to “plant, grow, cultivate, harvest, produce, sample, test, process, transport, transfer, take possession of, sell, import, and export hemp in this state to the greatest extent allowed under federal law.”

From previous discussions, we are all aware of the advantages the pilot program has over the national regulatory framework laid out in the USDA’s Interim Final Rule governing the production of hemp. In fact, Congress intentionally extended the pilot program so the department could spend more time addressing significant deficiencies within the rule and engage hemp farmers and stakeholders on workable solutions.

We understand the new expiration date of September 30, 2021, can be problematic in that it falls right in the middle of harvest season and, once again, sets up an untimely transition period between the pilot program and the permanent program. Because the legal parameters of the “Continuing Resolution” prevented an expiration date beyond September 30, 2021, we will use the coming months to convey a unified message to the Wisconsin congressional delegation that a further extension of the program into December of 2021 is desired and certainly warranted.

Thank you for your serious consideration of our request, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Rob Richard, President  
Wisconsin Hemp Alliance



Joe Bragger, President  
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation



Darin Von Ruden, President  
Wisconsin Farmers Union



Phillip Scott, President  
Wisconsin Hemp Farmers  
and Manufacturers Association

Cc: State Senator Patrick Testin  
State Senator Lena Taylor  
State Representative Tony Kurtz  
State Representative Dave Considine  
Congressman Mark Pocan  
Congressman Glenn Grothman