

HB 170 -- INDUSTRIAL HEMP

SPONSOR: Curtman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 10 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 1.

This bill exempts industrial hemp, which is defined as *Cannabis sativa* L. containing no greater than 0.3% THC, from the definition of marijuana and the list of controlled substances. In addition, it is legal for any person who has received an industrial hemp license from the Missouri Department of Agriculture to grow, harvest, and cultivate industrial hemp. A person who wants to produce and handle agricultural hemp seed for sale to licensed industrial hemp growers and handlers must also receive an agricultural hemp seed production permit from the department.

The bill creates an industrial hemp agricultural pilot program and specifies the requirements for an applicant of an industrial hemp license and agricultural hemp seed production permit. The department must issue a license or permit to an applicant who meets the statutory requirements and upon satisfactory completion of a fingerprint criminal history background check. A license or permit may not be issued to a person who has been found guilty of a felony offense within 10 years or a person who, at any time, has been found guilty of a felony offense under state or federal law regarding the possession, distribution, manufacturing, cultivation, or use of a controlled substance. Upon issuance of a license or permit, information regarding all license and permit holders must be forwarded to the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

An industrial hemp license or agricultural hemp seed production permit is nontransferable except to a spouse or child who otherwise meets the requirements for a license or permit; is valid for a three-year term unless revoked by the department; and may be renewed as determined by the department.

Every grower or handler must be subject to an industrial hemp plant monitoring system. The department may inspect a grower or handler to ensure compliance with statutes, department rules, the monitoring system, or a final department order directed to the grower's or handler's industrial hemp operations or activities. The department may also inspect any industrial hemp crop during the crop's growth phase and take a representative composite sample for field analysis. Crop exceeding the allowable THC limits may be detained, seized, or embargoed.

The department may charge growers and handlers reasonable fees as

determined by the department and adopt rules to administer the program. The department is also allowed to revoke or refuse to issue or renew an industrial hemp license or agricultural hemp seed production permit and to impose a civil penalty of not less than \$2,500 or more than \$50,000 for a violation of the requirements of the license or permit, department rules relating to growing or handling industrial hemp, the monitoring system, or a final order of the department that is specifically directed to the grower's or handler's industrial hemp operations or activities. In addition, the department may revoke or refuse to issue or renew a license or permit for failing to comply with statute or for a violation of department rules regarding agricultural operations or activities other than industrial hemp growing or handling.

A person who grows industrial hemp without a valid industrial hemp license is subject to an administrative fine of \$500 and must obtain an industrial hemp license within 30 days. If the person obtains the license within 30 days, the fine is refunded. If the person fails to obtain a license within 30 days, the person is fined \$1,000 per day until the person obtains a license or the crop is destroyed.

This bill is the same as HB 2038 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that industrial hemp is used in many goods manufactured in Missouri but the manufacturers must import the hemp from other countries. Before hemp became illegal to grow, Missouri was one of the largest producers of industrial hemp in the nation. The plant still grows wild in parts of the state. Studies have shown that farmers who add industrial hemp to their crop rotation may have higher yields. The THC levels in industrial hemp are lower than the level to be classified as a narcotic.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Curtman; Hyatt Bangert, Midwest Industrial Hemp Association; Dan Kietz; Shelly Reynolds, Merger Group; Steve Hunter; Chris Beedle; Kansas City Concentrates; Osama Yanis; and Empower Missouri.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the federal Farm Bill only allows for industrial hemp production by institutions of education or state departments of agriculture for research purposes. Hemp is still illegal at the federal level, which would force officers to choose between enforcing contradicting laws.

Testifying against the bill were Jason Grellner, Missouri Narcotics Officers Association; Missouri Police Chiefs Association; and Tim Lohmar, Missouri Association Of Prosecuting Attorneys.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that any cultivation of

industrial hemp must meet the restrictions in the federal Agriculture Act of 2014.

Testifying on the bill was Missouri Farm Bureau.