

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6700
AN ACT CONCERNING HEMP LICENSEES AND THE ADULT-USE CANNABIS
Title: MARKET.
Vote Date: 3/7/2023
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/23/2023
File No.: 202

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The hemp producers in Connecticut would like to be able to obtain a cultivator or micro-cultivator license for cannabis. They can use the same farming techniques for cannabis as they currently are using for hemp. The hemp plant is the same species as cannabis, the difference is the amount of THC in the plant. By allowing hemp farmers to grow cannabis a new form of revenue would be available for these farmers in Connecticut. This would allow manufactured hemp products to be sold in additional licensed facilities.

Proposed Substitute Language

Substitute language was needed for consistency with standard drafting conventions, clarity and accuracy.

Proposed substitute language in Section 1 provides consistency with standard drafting conventions and accuracy. Section 2 (4) (b) was added. Section 5 also required clarity. Section 14, 15, 16 were rewritten.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Rebecca Goetsch, PhD, Owner, Running Brook Hemp Co.

Ms. Goetsch is in support of this bill. Hemp farmers have been legally cultivating Cannabis Sativa in Connecticut since 2019. It is important to view hemp farmers as existing cannabis producers and afford them the same access to the recreational market as an existing medical

marijuana producer. The hemp community is grateful that the legislators have responded to the argument for inclusion with bill HB6700

Kelly Green, Hopriver Hemp

Mr. Green supports this bill. Hemp farmers are prepared to grow this cannabis, hemp plants are the same. As it stands there is no opportunity for small business, and this is Un-American.

Jacob Honig, CFO/Owner/Farmer, The CBGGurus, LLC

Mr. Honig supports this bill and has made some suggestions to revise. Hemp products should be sold to dispensaries. Medical marijuana patients should have available to them hemp products that can provide relief without the intoxicating effects of THC cannabis. They also should be able to purchase them at a dispensary.

Shawn Magill, CEO/Owner/Farmer, The CBGGurus

Mr. Magill supports this bill. Mr. Magill would love the opportunity to support the development of cannabis space in Connecticut as a young entrepreneur. He is a young farmer who is passionate about sustainability, innovation, natural farming, healthy competition and high-quality cannabis.

Eileen Kopec

Ms. Kopec supports HB6700. She should like to see hemp products available in dispensaries.

Ricardo Sotil, Owner, Lasa Extract LLC

Mr. Sotil is in support of this bill. Mr. Sotil feels that medical marijuana manufacturers are allowed to buy their way to the license and those of us who have invested millions of dollars have to pray and beg to achieve the license. Mr. Sotil sent in pictures of his facility showing that his equipment is the same as what marijuana cultivators are using. They do the same exact thing the only difference is the THC content.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council

Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council is in opposition to this bill as they feel it is premature to automatically add hemp licenses to cultivators or micro-cultivators in the Adult-Use Program. Legislation was passed during last year's session to create a 10-member working group to review this very issue. The group has never met and there has not been a final report issued. The process of the working group needs to happen before hemp be added to the front of the line.

Deborah Caviness, Daniel Glissman, and Adam Wood of Connecticut Cannabis Chamber of Commerce

Connecticut Cannabis Chamber of Commerce is in strong opposition to this bill. While we understand the interest of hemp industry stakeholders to access the separate adult-use cannabis market, they believe this would have a substantial impact on the nascent adult-use cannabis market in Connecticut. The rapid influx of hemp farmers into the cannabis cultivation would have significant economic impact that could be disastrous. This could

impact those cannabis businesses and licenses that adhered to the rules. Allowing hemp farmers to skip ahead of these businesses would undermine the integrity of the market.

Kebra Smith-Bolden, NoirEnVerte ACCJV

Ms. Smith-Bolden writes in opposition to this bill. She believes that non-social equity qualifying cultivators is a mistake. Allowing hemp farmers to cultivate would over saturate the market. Social Equity Approved DIA Cultivators should be stable before allowing the hemp farmers to enter a full playing field.

Vinny Mangiacopra, CEO, Social Equity Applicant, Impact Initiatives, LLC

Mr. Mangiacopra is in opposition to this bill. Allowing the hemp farmers to jump ahead of those who applied to the social equity or general license lotteries is not fair and equitable. It is important to maintain the integrity of the licensing process.

Louis J. Rinaldi, Guilford, CT

Mr. Rinaldi is in opposition to this bill. The fee structure in this bill is not realistic. Why not just admit that hemp farmers will be excluded from the state's cannabis market.

Benjamin Zachs, Fine Fettle

Mr. Zachs is in opposition to this bill. Hemp farmers should be given the opportunity to apply for DIA cultivator licenses like everyone else. There should be no jumping the queue.

The following people oppose the hemp farmers becoming cultivators. There is a variety of reasons, however they do not believe that the hemp farmers should be put in front of those who applied for the social equity and/or lottery to become cultivators. Many are concerned that the market will become saturated.

Bryan A. Murray, Acreage Holdings, LLC

Joseph Panella, DIA Cultivator, Elm City Agg

Andrew Simonow

Gisele Tyler, Shelton, CT

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Assistant Clerk

Date: 3/27/2023