



MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF PREVENTION
PROFESSIONAL AND ADVOCATES

POSITION STATEMENT ON HEMP (CANNABIS SATIVA)

There is no economically or environmentally sound justification for legalization and reintroduction of hemp cultivation in North America.

The plant being promoted as industrial hemp is the same marijuana plant (*cannabis sativa*) used as an intoxicant by young people in the 60s and 70s, with a THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) content of 0.25% to 1.5%. This low THC can intoxicate and can also be made into a “brew” or “tea” with a THC content of up to 40%.

Since industrial hemp and marijuana are the same plant, legalizing hemp production may mean the *de facto* legalization of marijuana cultivation. Short of chemical analysis, there is no way to identify the THC content of an individual marijuana plant.

- ♣ This would allow the growing of high content THC plants among the industrial crop with little chance of detection. This would make it far too easy to divert industrial hemp for illegal use thereby increasing marijuana use especially among young people.

The American Farm Bureau does not support hemp/marijuana as an industrial crop. According to the US Department of Agriculture and the US Department of Commerce, the profitability of industrial hemp is highly uncertain as well as unlikely. Hemp is a novelty product with limited sustainable development value even in a novelty market. Pro-drug advocates started the current hemp campaign and continue to be its main proponents.

For every proposed use of industrial hemp, there already exists an available product, or raw material, which is cheaper to manufacture and provides better market results.

- ♣ Many field crops including corn and alfalfa produce more tonnage per acre and are more soil building than hemp/marijuana. Corn and other more economically

produced plants such as sorghum, sugar cane, and sugar beets are already meeting market demands worldwide for vegetable-based ethanol fuel.

- ♣ The textile industry does not need hemp fiber. Cotton is the number one crop in the world because it is the cheapest to produce and most useful.
- ♣ Nothing can compete with forests for pulp as far as saving energy and using the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Many fast growing trees, such as Aspen, are being “farmed” to produce pulp for paper. This is a renewable source.
- ♣ Hemp/marijuana cultivation has had a significant adverse effect on the environment due to extensive use of herbicides and chemical fertilizers, deforestation and soil erosion.

Current available facts do not support hemp cultivation as a legally or economically viable option for US interests.

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