Hemp is Here, and We are Committed.

The hemp and cannabidiol ("CBD") industries are filled with exciting business opportunities. But, businesses and individuals operating within these industries also face unique legal and regulatory challenges. Building on our tradition of representation of those in agriculture, our industry-focused attorneys are devoted to helping you meet these challenges.

We are proud to represent hemp and CBD clients in North Carolina and beyond. Our clients include direct industry participants, such as cloning and genetics ventures, seed producers, farmers and growers, processors and extractors, logistics operations, and product manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. We also assist those who are collateral involved, including trade associations, brokers, consultants, marketing agencies, lenders and financial institutions, and other participants and vendors who do not directly "touch the plants."

Hemp and hemp-derived compounds, most notably CBD, were decriminalized with the passage of the federal Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Commercial opportunities in the market have greatly expanded as a result. That market is driven by the many commercial and industrial uses of the plant. To name just a few: hemp stalks and fiber are processed into paper, durable textiles and clothing, building products and renewable insulation; hemp seeds and oils are used in cooking applications, as food and beverage ingredients and flavorings, fuel, and animal feed; and CBD, which has been incorporated into countless medicinal, food, beverage, supplement, and personal care products, is extracted from hemp flower and biomass.

The hemp and CBD industries have benefited from tremendous national and local momentum. But, risk and uncertainty persist. State and federal regulations regarding the cultivation of hemp are ever-evolving. Similarly, the state and federal regulatory climate for food, beverage, supplement, and personal care products containing CBD or other hemp derivatives is dynamic and complex, and participation in that space requires a proactive and thoughtful approach. As dedicated hemp attorneys, we are continuously studying these issues - both on the state and federal levels - with an eye toward safely guiding our clients through the indeterminate landscape.

Adding Value for Clients

As part of a full-service business law firm, our Hemp Law Practice Group draws on the experience of attorneys in all practice areas within our Firm to ensure that our clients' needs are met. Our team of attorneys possesses broad experience in the areas of agribusiness; business, corporate, tax, finance, and mergers and acquisitions; local, state, and federal regulatory compliance and advice; trademarks, brand protection, and intellectual property; litigation; labor and employment; government relations and lobbying; and leasing, real estate development and transactions, and zoning and land use. Other attorneys in our firm with different areas of expertise are engaged as needed to provide services to our hemp and CBD industry clients.

Beyond the daily work of assisting our clients with their pressing legal issues, we are excited to be a part of the hemp and CBD communities. Our attorneys are passionate about the industry, the products, and the
people we serve. We conduct educational seminars for clients, plan, present and participate at industry-focused continuing education forums, attend industry conferences, and are actively engaged with industry-focused trade associations. Among others, the Firm is a proud member of the North Carolina Industrial Hemp Association. We also send informational articles and bulletins to our clients to keep them apprised of relevant issues.

We regularly help hemp and CBD clients understand and comply with the complex rules and regulations enforced by state and federal agencies, including:

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) State-level commissions or quasi-governmental bodies that license and regulate the hemp industry within defined jurisdictions, including the North Carolina Industrial Hemp Commission
- State-level Departments of Agriculture, which oversee and implement state-level hemp and CBD statutes and regulations, including the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- North Carolina Department of Revenue
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
- Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

We also assist our clients across a broad spectrum of their business needs, including:

- Licensing for growers, processors, and other industry participants
- Grower operations, including nursery, row crop, and greenhouse farming operations, and multi-crop integration
- Grower agreements, seed agreements, farm leases, and other operational documents
- Hemp and CBD processing, extraction, manufacturing, and retail operations
- Product liability issues
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Local, state, interstate, and international sales and employment matters
- Purchase contracts, sale agreements, distribution agreements, employment agreements, and other business contracts
- Entity formation, shareholder agreements, operating agreements, and partnership agreements
- Outside investments and capital fundraising, including cryptocurrency, crowdfunding, and state and federal securities compliance
- Equipment purchasing, equipment leasing, and warranty issues
- State and federal banking regulations, including lending, merchant services, and deposit account concerns
- Local land use and zoning issues
- Protecting hemp and CBD brands, plant varietals and genetics, formulas, recipes, trade secrets, and other intellectual property
- Interfacing with legislators concerning the North Carolina hemp and CBD industries through our lobbying and government relations team
- Regulatory compliance and advice as clients develop and implement their business plans and strategies

Our commitment to providing exceptional client service is an ongoing professional goal for each member of our Firm. We do this by creating and maintaining unique attorney-client relationships. Our clients appreciate the advantage of having accessible attorneys, and we encourage them to call whenever a legal or regulatory
question or concern arises. Our attorneys make themselves available, at work or at home, in or out of the office. We are a full-service law firm whose focus never strays from our core values of reliability, responsiveness, and value-added legal services. Our firm and our attorneys are committed to the hemp and CBD industries. We have led from the front of the legal industry in North Carolina, and we will continue to do so for the benefit of our clients.