

Important Update: Hemp Pilot Program Extended

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For months, farmers and growers of hemp have faced a difficult decision: What to do at the end of October as the North Carolina industrial hemp pilot program expires and we phase into hemp production under the USDA's Interim Final Rule.

The issue stems from language in the 2018 Federal Farm Bill, which terminates the authority for continued operation of the state-level pilot programs on October 31, 2020. This possible shift from a state-run pilot program to a USDA run production program caused much concern for North Carolina growers, especially given the timing of the shift, questions about continued licensure, and the imposition of more onerous rules that could stifle the fledgling industry.

But, in a positive turn of news, the issue has been resolved – at least, temporarily. Yesterday, the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan continuing resolution to extend federal government funding and avoid a shutdown. That resolution included language to extend the hemp pilot program through September 30, 2021. For now, growers operating under a state-level pilot program can rest easy knowing they have an additional year to prepare for their transition to a new set of rules – and state lawmakers have an additional year to thoughtfully plan and draft implementing legislation, should they choose to enact a state-level permanent production program.

We've made it our mission to keep our clients informed about the ever-changing laws and regulations surrounding the hemp industry at both the state and federal levels. Whether you are a small hemp grower or a large producer, our Hemp Law attorneys are here to offer insight, guidance, and legal services.

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