

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 10, 2015

Katy Coba
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Daniel J. Arp
Oregon State University
1500 SW Jefferson
Corvallis, OR 97331

Dear Ms. Coba and Mr. Arp:

We are writing to encourage the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and Oregon State University (OSU) to advance the work that is already being done to facilitate the industrial hemp research pilot program in Oregon in time for the 2016 growing season. In doing so, we ask that ODA, in partnership with OSU, send us a timeline by which you plan to implement the pilot program in time for the 2016 growing season.

As you know, hemp farming generally is not permitted under federal law, yet Americans consume more hemp products than any other nation. This ban means that 100% of the hemp products that are consumed in the United States are imported, leaving American farmers unable to benefit from this growing market. In an effort to study hemp production in the U.S., Congress included an amendment to the 2014 Farm Bill that allows states and universities to grow and conduct research on industrial hemp to determine whether commercial production of hemp would be beneficial for American farmers and businesses.

The potential for industrial hemp production represents a great opportunity for Oregon agriculture. Many Oregon farmers have expressed interest in participating in this pilot program and some have already obtained permits to grow hemp from the Oregon Department of Agriculture. However, because of concerns about how Oregon's marijuana industry will be conducted and uncertainty about the Farm Bill provisions, as well as hemp related bills in the 2015 Oregon Legislative session, the research pilot program has been slow to start.

To be in compliance with the Farm Bill, farmers must be certified by and registered with ODA, and they must partner with OSU to conduct the research. Without ODA's active participation in the pilot program and the cooperation of OSU, Oregon farmers could lose out on the chance to make Oregon a leader in the hemp industry.

Oregon farmers deserve to know that systems are in place, and our farmers need to be informed of the rules and procedures they will need to follow to participate in the program. If there is any way that our offices can be of assistance in this process, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you and helping Oregon become a leader in this growing industry.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress