

**FEAR ENDS.
HOPE BEGINS.**
★ **KUCINICH** ★
PRESIDENT 2004



“It’s time to awaken the American Dream...where Fear Ends and Hope Begins!”

DENNIS J. KUCINICH

Hemp

Dennis Kucinich supports legalizing the growing of hemp in the United States. Vote Hemp has graded the candidates’ positions and given Kucinich an A+. You can read more on Vote Hemp’s web site at <http://www.votehemp.com/VGuide/kucinich.html>

Re-legalizing the Commercial Growing of Industrial Hemp in the United States

Since 1937, Federal laws have criminalized a harmless plant. Outdated attitudes and drug war paranoia in Washington have limited the many uses of this vital plant and have even prohibited its growth in the United States.

That plant is hemp, cousin to the psychoactive marijuana plant. Hemp is classified as a “drug” under the Controlled Substances Act, although it poses no danger to public health or safety. Hemp is a distinct variety of the plant species *Cannabis sativa* L. that contains less than 1% THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the psychoactive chemical that gets people “high.” According to David West, Ph.D., “THC levels in industrial hemp are so low that no one could ever get high from smoking it. Moreover, hemp contains a relatively high percentage of another cannabinoid, CBD, that actually blocks the marijuana high. Hemp, it turns out, is not only not marijuana; it could be called anti-marijuana.” Article 28-2 of the UN Single Treaty Convention on Narcotic Drugs states, “This Convention shall not apply to the cultivation of the cannabis plant exclusively for industrial purposes (fiber and seed) or horticultural purposes.” The United States is a signer of this convention.

The industrial hemp plant has a surprising number and variety of uses, including textiles, paper, food, paint, bio-fuels, bio-composites, automobile parts, plastics, and fiberboard. In ancient times, people added handfuls of hemp fiber to their clay to strengthen the bricks used for building. In France today, houses are being built from hemp that are fire and termite resistant. Tree-free hemp paper can be made without dioxin and can be recycled 10 more times than tree-

pulp paper. An acre of hemp produces more pulp than four acres of trees. In 1916, USDA Agriculture Bulletin 404 reported that our forests were being cut down three times faster than they grew. It called for alternatives to the use of timber and recommended using hemp pulp for paper instead of tree pulp.

For textiles, an acre of land will produce two to three times as much hemp fiber as cotton, and hemp requires little to no pesticides or herbicides. Hemp leaves the soil in excellent condition (even removing heavy metals) for any succeeding crop, especially when weeds may otherwise be a problem. Hemp anchors and protects the soil from runoff, and during reforestation tree roots will follow the paths loosened by hemp roots, so trees grow more quickly.

Hemp seed plays an important role in nutrition for humans, livestock, and birds. Hemp seed is a complete source of protein, second only to soybeans, and contains the highest concentration of essential amino and fatty acids found in any food. It contains omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids at the optimum 3:1 ratio and contains gamma linolenic acid (GLA). Hemp seed could replace the animal protein fed to livestock at far less cost to the health of people and our planet. It is also perfect for a vegetarian and vegan diet.

By using a renewable resource, the hemp industry has the potential to help move our economy in a direction that is more sustainable and more socially and environmentally responsible. Since hemp grows well in most climates and offers amazing product versatility, it has the potential to stimulate commercial activity that benefits both humans and the ecology.

“Make the most of the hempseed, sow it everywhere.”
President George Washington, 1794

During America’s Colonial days, hemp was a cornerstone of civil development, and its production was considered necessary. England and Holland hoped their American colonies would furnish enough hemp for their great navies, for which it was as important as flax, iron, and timber.

A Kucinich administration will put an end to the demonization of hemp, paving the way for renewed commercial hemp cultivation in the United States.

Hemp has always been important to the U.S. economy and was exchanged as money throughout most of the Americas from 1631 to the early 1800s. Both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were drafted on hempen paper. Colonial women sewed soldiers' uniforms and flags from the tough hemp fibers, and bagging, cordage, twines, ropes, and sails were all made with hemp. Oil for lamps and for paints was pressed from the seed.

As the American Revolution approached, patriot Thomas Paine insisted that the colonies were strong enough to break free from old King George's oppression and rise to their own greatness, in part "because hemp flourishes here."

After Pearl Harbor, when hemp imports to the United States were cut off, the U.S. government asked farmers to grow hemp once again, although growing it without a permit had been prohibited since 1937. USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation contracted with War Hemp Industries, Inc., to produce planting seed and fiber, and 42 hemp mills were built across the American Midwest. The USDA film, "Hemp for Victory" was shown in theaters and Grange halls across the land. USDA Farmers' Bulletin No. 1935, entitled "Hemp," was issued to farmers in January, 1943. Hemp was used to sew millions of pairs of boots for American soldiers, hemp twine was used for tying and upholstery, and thousands of feet of hemp rope were supplied to each battleship. In fact, the parachute that saved George H. W. Bush's life during World War II was rigged with hemp. Even 4-H clubs in Kentucky planted their own hemp patches "to serve their country in wartime." By war's end, nearly a million acres of hemp had been cultivated to support the war effort.

In April 1952, during the Korean War, the USDA reissued Farmer's Bulletin No. 1935. By 1957, however, prohibitionists had reimposed a total ban on the domestic hemp industry, which has been in effect ever since.

Hemp Today, Hemp in Our Future

Hemp is the natural competition that the timber and synthetic products industries don't want you to know about. It is part of a sustainable economy that will help wean us from the dependence on foreign energy sources. This new economy will help farmers to be an integral part of the restoration of rural America.

Today's hemp industry is a thriving commercial success, despite the government's refusal to let American farmers be a part of this economic growth. U.S. retailers and manufacturers annually import large quantities of hemp fiber, hemp seeds, and hemp seed oil from Canada and other nations. Studies commissioned by a number of U.S. states have recommended hemp as a viable crop, and legislation has been enacted in some states allowing farmers to grow hemp. But Federal approval is still necessary, and it is seldom given.

On February 6, 2004, after several years of litigation, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals permanently enjoined an attempt by the Drug Enforcement Administration to regulate foodstuffs containing materials derived from hemp, opening the way to even greater commercialization of hemp products than exists today in the United States. The Court held that Congress had explicitly exempted industrial hemp from its definition of THC in the Controlled Substances Act, and that the DEA would have to go through well-defined procedures to "schedule" hemp as a controlled substance.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture recently urged the USDA, the DEA, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy to develop and adopt an official definition of industrial hemp that comports with definitions used by countries producing hemp. Those definitions make it possible to grow hemp for food and fiber in those countries, feeding, clothing, and giving livelihoods to thousands of people. They also urged Congress to distinguish statutorily between industrial hemp and marijuana and to direct the DEA to revise its policies to allow the USDA to regulate hemp farming.

As President, Dennis Kucinich will launch a major renewables effort and spur research and investment in alternative energy sources. As an environmentalist, his view is always holistic and global. A Kucinich administration will put an end to the demonization of hemp, paving the way for renewed commercial hemp cultivation in the United States and breaking down the unnecessary barriers that keep American farmers from enjoying the benefits of this thriving, sustainable industry.

Note: This is an industrial hemp issue. Dennis knows the difference! See also Marijuana Decriminalization at http://www.kucinich.us/issues/marijuana_decrim.php