



Maryland Department of Agriculture

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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LEGISLATIVE COMMENT

DATE: March 12, 2020

BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 1035

SHORT TITLE: HEMP FARMING PROGRAM - EXPANSION - PROCESSING HEMP

MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION:

SB 1035 expands the existing Maryland Industrial Hemp Research Pilot Program under the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to include the promotion, monitoring, licensing, and regulation of the processing of industrial hemp.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

MDA's industrial hemp pilot program is limited to the registration of sites where industrial hemp is to be grown and facilitation of research on industrial hemp. MDA does not currently have jurisdiction over the processing, sale, or distribution of industrial hemp products. This bill seeks to clarify that.

Nearly all states that allow hemp farming regulate hemp processing. This is important to ensure the hemp being processed meets the 0.3% Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) levels required by law, especially hemp shipped into the state for processing. Unregulated processors could be processing non-compliant hemp (above 0.3% THC) and if so, some products they produce could contain THC. With proper regulations, trustworthy and dependable processors can prosper creating a much-needed service for hemp farmers during this pilot program.

If you have additional questions, please contact Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs, at cassie.shirk@maryland.gov or 410-841-5886.