



OPPOSE HB574

February 25, 2020

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice-Chair and Committee Members
Environment & Transportation Committee
6 Bladen St
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Maryland Hemp Coalition, I write in strong opposition to HB574.

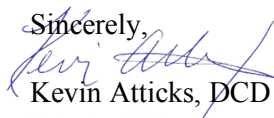
The Maryland Hemp Coalition formed in December, and represents growers, processors and sellers of hemp. The industry is only in its second year, with 65 growers located throughout Maryland growing nearly 1,500 acres.

Hemp is a legal agricultural crop that produces oil, seed and fiber. Its products are not to be confused with THC-producing strains of cannabis that support the state's medical cannabis program.

HB574 creates a damaging precedent by regulating what and where farmers may grow. The bill's buffer from residences and indoor grow requirement would affect many licensed hemp farms in the state, prohibiting them from growing hemp upon this bill's passage.

Maryland—like many states—has a stated “Right to Farm” policy giving deference to farmers, protecting them from nuisance complaints from neighbors who may not appreciate the sights, sounds and smells associated with agriculture. Such concerns can be mediated through state programs, or limited through local planning code text amendments. However, any move to limit farming could mean devastating results for farmers.

We urge an unfavorable vote.

Sincerely,

Kevin Atticks, DCD

