



MARYLAND HEMP
COALITION

OPPOSE HB249

January 18, 2021

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 HB249.

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.

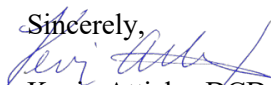
Hemp is a legal agricultural crop that produces oil, seed and fiber. Its products are not to be confused with THC-producing strains of cannabis that support the state's medical cannabis program.

HB249 creates a damaging precedent by regulating what and where farmers may grow. HB249's prohibition from growing hemp if their land is within 25' of a property with a residence would affect almost every licensed hemp farm in the state, prohibiting them from growing hemp upon this bill's passage. Growers live on their farms, and most farms in the state abut a property that harbors a residence.

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

