

NO. R-333. JOINT RESOLUTION URGING THE U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION (DEA), THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) AND THE U.S. CONGRESS TO RECONSIDER FEDERAL POLICIES THAT RESTRICT THE CULTIVATION AND MARKETING OF INDUSTRIAL HEMP AND RELATED PRODUCTS.

(J.R.S. 98)

Offered by: Senator Ready of Addison County and Senator Illuzzi of Essex-Orleans County.

Whereas, a variety of farming activities are all significant components of Vermont's agricultural economy, and despite Vermonters' dedicated efforts, many of the agricultural endeavors that have traditionally provided the economic sustenance for our state are no longer as financially rewarding as in years past, and

Whereas, a potentially profitable new source for agricultural development is the planting and harvesting of industrial hemp (*cannabis sativa* L. with a tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content of less than 1%), which has a multitude of commercial uses including food for animal and human consumption, textile fiber, building materials and composites, fuel and industrial lubricants, paper and other fiber products, and

Whereas, in 1996, the Vermont General Assembly enacted Act No. 176, which directed the University of Vermont to investigate the viability of industrial hemp, and the study found probable economic benefits from a Vermont hemp industry, and

Whereas, a 1996 statistically representative survey of the Vermont population found that 77% of Vermonters support changing the laws so that farmers can grow industrial hemp in Vermont, and

Whereas, a 1999 University of Kentucky report and current trade data from Canada further support the economic viability of industrial hemp as an alternative crop and sustainable resource for numerous markets, and

Whereas, the stringent federal criteria established under 21 U.S.C. § 823 and its implementing regulation, 21 C.F.R. § 1301.71 and .72 present a nearly insurmountable barrier to the initiation of an industrial hemp crop in Vermont, and

Whereas, more than 30 countries, including Canada, currently permit the cultivation and production of low-THC industrial hemp, and

Whereas, in 1999 the legislatures of North Dakota, Minnesota and Hawaii passed legislation permitting farmers to grow industrial hemp, and on December 14, 1999, a test plot of low-THC cannabis was planted on Hawaiian soil, and

Whereas, the United States is the largest importer of foreign-grown hemp based materials and products in the world, and

Whereas, until federal barriers to the cultivation and production of industrial hemp are lifted, the State of Vermont is being deprived of taking part in this agriculturally based emerging international market, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes the differentiation between industrial hemp and marijuana, industrial hemp being those plants of cannabis sativa L. that contain a THC concentration of one percent or less by weight, and be it

further

Resolved: That the General Assembly strongly urges DEA, the National Office of Drug Control Policy, and the USDA to collaboratively develop and adopt an official definition of industrial hemp, and recognize a one percent THC level, or less, as the standard for industrial hemp, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly strongly urges Congress to amend U.S. Code sections 21 U.S.C. § 812 (10) and 21 U.S.C. § 841 to distinguish between marijuana and industrial hemp as they relate to production, possession, delivery, and intended use, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly requests the DEA and the USDA to review the procedures under which their Canadian counterparts are authorized to sanction the commercial development of industrial hemp, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly strongly urges Congress statutorily to direct the DEA to revise its policies to be less restrictive and to allow states to establish state regulatory programs that may be similar to the Canadian model, thus fostering the development of domestic hemp industries, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly requests Congress to establish a comprehensive new hemp research program to update the scientific knowledge of industrial hemp, and to authorize a certified seed and germ plasma bank, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly requests Congress to appropriate

funds for a USDA line budget item dedicated to hemp related research and market development, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, Acting U.S. Drug Enforcement Administrator Donnie R. Marshall, U.S. Senator Patrick J. Leahy, U.S. Senator James M. Jeffords, U.S. Representative Bernard Sanders, and to the President of the United States.