



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, July 10, 2020

Media Contact: Jesse Broder Van Dyke (808) 284-6242

Legislature passes bill to legalize industrial hemp

Honolulu, Hawai‘i – Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, applauded the final passage of a bill in the House of Representatives today to legalize the growing, processing, and sale of industrial hemp in Hawai‘i.

It passed the Senate on Wednesday unanimously, with Senators Les Ihara, Clarence K. Nishihara, and Laura H. Thielen expressing reservations.

The bill now goes to Governor David Ige to sign into law.

“This commercial hemp program will help grow a new industry in our state, which is especially needed now due to the impacts of COVID-19,” said Senator Gabbard. “This bill will provide an opportunity for economic development and the diversification of our economy. Hemp is an incredible plant that produces over 25,000 products and we’re very close to making the Hawaiian Hemp brand a reality, not only in the U.S. but globally as well.”

The bill ([HB1819 HD2 SD3](#)), was championed by Senators Gabbard, Donovan Dela Cruz, Rosalyn H. Baker, Karl Rhoads, and Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi, and Representatives Mark M. Nakashima, Sylvia J. Luke, Nadine K. Nakamura, Kyle T. Yamashita, Richard P. Creagan, Chris Lee, and House Speaker Scott K. Saiki.

Another hemp bill, Senate Bill 1353, was vetoed by Governor Ige last year, after he expressed concerns that it was unenforceable. This year’s version was worked on directly with the Governor’s administration to ensure its enactment.

“Instead of using state funds to set up a hemp agency, this bill was amended to save half-a-million dollars by allowing local hemp farmers to apply directly to the USDA to get their licenses,” said Senator Gabbard. An older version of the bill would have appropriated \$522,000 for five positions for the State-run hemp program and data tracking/administrative costs.

The bill was also amended to change the size of buffer zones after committees received testimony about the impacts buffer zones would have on existing hemp farmers, and concerns related to noise, smells, and excessive lighting from neighbors of an existing hemp farm in Kula.

“We balanced these concerns by exempting the 50 Hawai‘i hemp farmers who have licenses under the existing pilot program, and instituted 500-foot buffer zones for any new hemp farms around residences, playgrounds, childcare facilities, and schools,” said Senator Gabbard.

-END-