



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
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JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

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October 22, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Re: Guidance on State Hemp Implementation Plans

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write respectfully to urge you to finalize the rules outlining state guidance for industrial hemp implementation plans.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill, Section 10113) directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to issue regulations and guidance for the commercial production of industrial hemp in the United States. It is our understanding that on June 27, 2019, the Office of Management and Budget began to review rulemaking to implement the program. Until such guidelines are in place, states such as Maine are unable to move forward with our own guidance for growers and instead are unfairly restricted by the rules under the 2014 Farm Bill.

Maine recently passed Legislative Document 1749, An Act to Amend the States Hemp laws, which outlined rules and regulations regarding hemp production within the state of Maine. Additionally, the Maine legislature postponed Legislative Document 569, a resolve directing the Maine Department of Agriculture to implement our state's hemp plan, until we receive further guidance from the USDA outlining federal regulations.

Most recently, it has come to our attention that growers in Maine are receiving notices of bank account closures and insurance policies not being renewed because of uncertainty around federal hemp regulations. These are troubling developments that stifle the growth and aspirations of hardworking farm businesses.

Given the growth and rate at which hemp production has accelerated in Maine and across the country and continued confusion around federal laws, we urge you to work swiftly with the Office of Management and Budget to finalize USDA's guidance for state implementation plans. This Federal guidance will not only help provide long-needed clarification to the states but will be valuable to the broader lending and insurance industries.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Governor Janet Mills

Commissioner Amanda Beal
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

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