

# Iowa Brewers, Retailers Oppose New Hemp Legislation

A new law governing hemp products in Iowa has sparked significant backlash from local brewers and retailers, with some threatening legal action to protect their interests. The measure, passed by Hawkeye State lawmakers in April and signed into law by Republican Governor Kim Reynolds last month, imposes stringent limits on THC content in consumable hemp products.

## Stringent THC Limits

The law “prohibits the sale and possession of consumable hemp products that contain greater than 4 mg total THC per serving and greater than 10 mg total THC per container within the state of Iowa.” This has raised concerns among local businesses who argue that the restrictions are overly burdensome and could devastate their operations.

## Impact on Local Brewers

Local brewers have been vocal about their concerns, noting that the new rules could significantly impact their product lines. According to the Des Moines Register, the proposed rules define “closed-container beverage” as “one serving per container,” effectively banning any beverage with a potency of more than 4 mg of total THC from being sold.

Dave Moore, CEO of Lua Brewing and Big Grove Brewery, expressed his concerns to the Des Moines Register. “Only one of our products would be compliant, and we would lose products that account for about 80% of our sales,” Moore said. “This ruling would have severe financial implications for our business.”

## Legal Action Considered

Moore indicated that if an amicable resolution could not be found, legal action might be necessary. “If we can’t find an amicable resolution that allows businesses to continue operating within the parameters set forth in the statute, we will take legal action as a last resort to protect our interests,” he stated.

## Governor’s Concerns

When signing the bill into law, Governor Reynolds acknowledged the controversy surrounding the measure. “I have concerns about this bill and have heard from individuals and groups on both sides of the issue,” Reynolds said. “Ultimately, I am signing it into law to protect minors from dangerous and intoxicating products.”

## Department of Public Safety’s Role

The bill was initially submitted by the state's Department of Public Safety, which cited the rise of high potency, high-THC products as a primary concern. "We've seen an emergence of high potency, high-THC products hit the market," said Josie Wagler, the department's legislative liaison. The intention behind the law is to provide additional regulatory tools for HHS and law enforcement.

### **Unintended Consequences**

However, some lawmakers admitted that the reforms have led to unintended consequences. State House Rep. Steve Holt commented in February that the situation had become "sort of the wild, wild west" with THC-infused products.

### **Ongoing Opposition**

From the beginning, the proposal faced opposition from Iowa business owners and hemp growers. Scott Booher, owner of Four Winds Farms, urged lawmakers to consider the needs of patients who rely on hemp products for medical conditions.

### **Future Uncertain**

Breweries have been in contact with HHS since the release of the draft rules, but it remains unclear whether any changes will be made to address their concerns. The situation continues to develop as local businesses and state officials navigate the complexities of the new law.

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