

NC Lawmakers Consider Regulation of Hemp-Derived THC Edibles and Beverages

North Carolina legislators focused on drug regulations Wednesday, with the Senate committee agreeing on rules for hemp-derived consumables and House members moving to crack down on the sale and use of “gas station heroin.” The state House fast-tracked proposed legislation to make unauthorized sales of the opioid-like substance tianeptine a felony. Simple possession would generally be a Class I misdemeanor, according to information prepared by legislative staff.

Tianeptine is sold in dietary supplements commonly found in convenience stores, smoke shops, and online. [The Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) does not regulate it but has warned against its sale and purchase. In high doses, tianeptine mimics opioids and can lead to dependence and overdose, according to the FDA. At least 11 states have banned tianeptine. A House committee on substance use that met last winter recommended North Carolina take action too.

House Bill 903 makes tianeptine a Schedule II controlled substance, putting it on a list with fentanyl, codeine, oxycodone, and dozens of other drugs. Mark Creech, executive director of the Christian Action League, applauded the move. “Putting tianeptine on the controlled substance list will provide law enforcement with a clear legal framework to address illegal possession and distribution,” he said.

The bill moved through two House committees Wednesday with no opposition on its way to a vote in the full House. If the House passes the bill, it would go to the Senate for consideration.

Senate Committee Discusses THC Regulations

In the Senate Judiciary Committee, Reilly Thomas Dunn of Raleigh, who co-founded a company with his wife that sells beverages with [THC from hemp](#), thanked the committee for considering a House bill regulating consumables containing THC from hemp.

“I’m not a lawyer or a lobbyist,” he said. “I’m just a guy who discovered that you can drink THC instead of alcohol.” His company’s customers include young families, veterans, and other believers. “We have been asking for regulation in this space for a really long time because when we do this thing right, it is going to be a huge industry for North Carolina,” he said.

The bill sets a limit on how much THC from hemp gummies, beverages, and other consumable products can contain. It prohibits sales to people younger than 21 and bans distributing samples in parks or public streets. It would be illegal for people under 21 to buy these products or use fake IDs to try to buy them.

Regulation of Kratom and Additional Provisions

The bill similarly regulates products containing kratom, the leaves of a tropical tree. Kratom products and hemp-derived consumables would be banned from school grounds. The House passed a version of the bill last year. The Senate added a section to create a “death by distribution” charge for selling or giving someone

tianeptine that causes the person's death.

The move to [regulate hemp-derived THC edibles and beverages](#), along with cracking down on substances like tianeptine, highlights North Carolina's commitment to addressing public health and safety concerns associated with unregulated drug use.

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