

# USDA and USTR Add Hemp Executive to Trade Committee

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) have appointed Dylan Summers, VP of Government Affairs at Lazarus Naturals, to their Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) for Trade in Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Hemp. This move aims to enhance the promotion of U.S.-grown cannabis globally.

## **New Hemp Industry Representative on ATAC**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and USTR Representative Katherine Tai announced Summers' appointment on Thursday. He joins three other hemp industry stakeholders on the 14-member ATAC: National Industrial Hemp Council (NIHC) President Patrick Atagi, NIHC board member Patricia Sheikh, and Oregon Hemp Commission's Eric Pike.

## **Hemp's Growing Role in U.S. Agriculture**

The ATAC's renaming last year reflects hemp's expanding importance in agriculture. Summers will serve on the committee until at least 2028, offering insights into trade policy and objectives related to hemp.

## **Recent USDA Support for Hemp Promotion**

USDA recently awarded \$745,000 to NIHC to promote hemp internationally, following a \$200,000 grant in 2020. This comes as the industry faces challenges, including potential legislative bans on consumable hemp-based cannabinoid products and unclear regulations.

## **Legislative Developments Affecting Hemp Industry**

Current legislative proposals include measures to reduce regulatory barriers for hemp farmers and reconsider bans on industry participation by individuals with prior drug felony convictions. Stakeholders are also advocating for hemp products like CBD to be marketed as dietary supplements or food ingredients.

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