

Hemp Company Secures \$8.4M for Sustainable Building Solutions

Hemp Company Wins \$8.4M in Federal Funding for Sustainable Construction & Automotive Alternatives

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded \$8.42 million to the innovative hemp technology company Hempitecture to build an industrial hemp processing and manufacturing facility in Tennessee. The funding, part of the DOE's Advanced Manufacturing and Recycling Grant Program, will support Hempitecture's development of sustainable materials for industries ranging from construction to automotive manufacturing.

The grant is among 14 awarded to projects across 15 coal communities, as part of a larger \$428 million initiative aimed at driving clean energy innovation and transforming areas previously reliant on coal. The funds are allocated through the DOE's Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains (MESCC) with the goal of advancing domestic clean energy and reducing carbon footprints.

Revitalizing Communities Through Clean Energy Innovation

The DOE has placed a strong emphasis on tapping into the expertise of workers in former coal communities to support a national clean energy transition. As U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm explained, "The transition to America's clean energy future is being shaped by communities filled with the valuable talent and experience that comes from powering our country for decades." Granholm also emphasized the role of these projects in both national security and economic revitalization. "By leveraging the know-how and skillset of the former coal workforce, we are strengthening our national security while helping advance forward-facing technologies and revitalize communities across the nation."

This funding aligns with Hempitecture's mission to create sustainable alternatives to traditional materials by producing low-carbon and eco-friendly products. The company's Tennessee facility will focus on the production of industrial hemp-based materials for sectors like construction, furniture, and even the automotive industry, which is making strides in sustainability initiatives.

Expanding Into the Automotive Industry

Hempitecture co-founder and COO Tommy Gibbons highlighted the company's commitment to sustainability in a statement to Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The company has developed an innovative manufacturing process that allows for the production of hemp-based materials that can be used in construction, furniture, and insulation. However, Gibbons expressed particular enthusiasm for expanding into the automotive sector.

"There's a huge use of recycled and bio-based textiles by European automotive manufacturers," Gibbons noted, "Our plan in Tennessee is to supply American automakers with natural fiber, nonwovens as they seek

to reduce their embodied carbon footprint.”

Natural fiber-based materials like those produced by Hempitecture offer automotive manufacturers an opportunity to reduce emissions associated with production. As car companies move to eco-friendly options, hemp-based materials could potentially provide a cost-effective and sustainable solution for vehicle interiors and insulation.

Hempitecture’s Partnership History with the DOE

This recent funding is not Hempitecture’s first partnership with the DOE. In 2021, the company received \$90,000 in federal funding to develop a hemp wool insulation product with high thermal resistance and a low carbon footprint. This initial support was a springboard for Hempitecture, allowing it to refine its hemp-based insulation technology and further its commitment to sustainability.

With this new grant, Hempitecture plans to scale up its operations significantly, further advancing its mission to create sustainable, hemp-based products for industries eager to transition away from fossil fuel dependency. This facility will not only contribute to the DOE’s clean energy goals but also provide economic benefits and job opportunities in Tennessee, particularly in communities impacted by the decline of coal.

As demand for sustainable materials grows, Hempitecture is well-positioned to lead the way in developing products that meet the needs of both the construction and automotive industries, potentially revolutionizing the use of renewable resources in these sectors.

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