

# Ohio Governor Temporarily Bans THC Infused Hemp Products

## Ohio Governor Temporarily Bans THC-Infused Hemp Products Amid Growing Safety Concerns and Calls for Regulation

### *A Swift and Sweeping Move to Halt Sales of Intoxicating Hemp Products Across Ohio*

In a decisive response to growing concerns about unregulated intoxicating hemp products, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has issued a 90-day statewide ban on the sale of THC-infused hemp products, including popular gummies, drinks, and edibles commonly sold in gas stations, convenience stores, and taprooms.

The executive order, signed on October 8, mandates that all retailers remove THC-containing hemp items from their shelves and stop sales entirely by 12:01 a.m. on October 14. The ban applies specifically to any products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) sold outside licensed marijuana dispensaries.

According to *The Columbus Dispatch*, this new measure represents one of the most comprehensive temporary restrictions on intoxicating hemp products in the nation.

### **The Executive Order: A 90-Day Pause to Clear Shelves and Reset Regulations**

Governor DeWine's order not only halts sales but also requires immediate removal of product displays. In addition, it suspends the Ohio Department of Agriculture's rules that previously governed the sale and oversight of hemp-derived THC items.

The governor emphasized that this 90-day period will serve as a temporary safeguard while lawmakers draft permanent regulations to govern intoxicating hemp products. Once the ban expires, the Ohio General Assembly will be responsible for setting clear, enforceable rules to address both public health and industry oversight.

"This pause is necessary to give lawmakers time to put real guardrails in place," DeWine stated during a press conference announcing the order.

### **Protecting Children: Governor DeWine's Primary Motivation Behind the Ban**

At the heart of DeWine's decision lies a deep concern for child safety and consumer protection. As a father of eight and grandfather of more than two dozen, the governor spoke passionately about the dangers of unregulated THC-infused products, many of which are packaged to resemble children's candies.

He noted that several THC gummy products on the market mimic the packaging of well-known candies like Sour Patch Kids and Nerds, creating a serious risk of accidental ingestion by minors.

“These intoxicating hemp products are dangerous, and we need to better protect our children,” DeWine said, underscoring that some gummies contain up to 100 milligrams of THC — a potent dose even for experienced cannabis users.

The governor’s remarks echo growing concerns from parents, health officials, and educators who have reported an uptick in accidental THC ingestion among minors across the country.

## **Rising National Tensions Over Hemp-Derived THC and Delta-8 Products**

Ohio’s temporary ban reflects a broader national struggle to regulate intoxicating hemp products, which have surged in popularity since the 2018 federal Farm Bill legalized hemp production and derivatives containing less than 0.3% delta-9 THC.

However, through chemical conversion processes, manufacturers have been able to produce intoxicating cannabinoids like delta-8 THC and THC-O, which fall into a legal gray area — technically derived from hemp but still capable of producing psychoactive effects similar to marijuana.

State officials nationwide have raised alarms over the lack of uniform testing, labeling, and age restrictions for these products, leading to confusion among consumers and retailers alike.

## **Other States Follow Suit: A Patchwork of Bans, Bills, and Executive Orders**

Ohio is not alone in its attempt to rein in hemp-derived THC products. Several states have taken similar or even more aggressive steps:

- Illinois Governor JB Pritzker has threatened an executive order to ban intoxicating hemp items after lawmakers failed to establish regulations earlier this year.
- California Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed a bill to bring hemp-derived THC products under the state’s regulated cannabis framework, effectively integrating the market about a year after banning unregulated hemp THC sales.
- In contrast, Texas continues to permit a thriving hemp-derived THC industry valued at approximately \$5.5 billion, after state efforts to impose restrictions were struck down in court.

This patchwork of policies highlights the regulatory uncertainty gripping the U.S. hemp and cannabis sectors, an industry still divided between state legality and federal ambiguity.

## **Implications for Ohio’s Retailers, Producers, and Consumers**

For Ohio businesses that rely on hemp-derived THC products, the 90-day ban poses an immediate and significant challenge. Retailers must pull affected products from shelves, potentially facing revenue losses during the peak fall retail season.

Producers and distributors may also experience supply chain disruptions, as they scramble to understand which products fall under the “intoxicating” classification. The Ohio Department of Agriculture is expected to release guidance in the coming weeks to clarify compliance standards and help businesses prepare for any future regulations that may follow.

Consumers, meanwhile, are urged to exercise caution when purchasing THC-infused items online or in neighboring states. The temporary pause may lead to short-term shortages, but DeWine’s administration maintains that public safety and long-term market integrity are the priorities.

## **Calls for a Balanced, Regulated Approach Moving Forward**

Industry advocates are urging lawmakers to use this 90-day window to develop a balanced regulatory framework that ensures consumer safety without dismantling the state's growing hemp sector.

They argue that responsible regulation — rather than outright prohibition — could help legitimize the hemp-derived THC market, promote product testing, enforce childproof packaging, and establish potency limits.

Legal experts suggest that Ohio could follow California's lead by integrating hemp-derived THC into the existing cannabis regulatory system, allowing the state to benefit from taxation and oversight while preventing unregulated sales.

## **A Temporary Ban with Long-Term Consequences for Ohio's Cannabis Landscape**

Governor DeWine's executive order signals a turning point in Ohio's cannabis policy. While the measure is temporary, it underscores the growing urgency among state leaders to address the regulatory vacuum surrounding intoxicating hemp products.

For now, the future of hemp-derived THC in Ohio depends on the actions of the state legislature in the months ahead. Whether lawmakers opt for a regulated market, stricter controls, or continued prohibition will determine not only the fate of thousands of small businesses but also the broader trajectory of Ohio's evolving cannabis industry.

Until then, the state's message is clear: public safety comes first, and the unregulated sale of intoxicating hemp products will not be tolerated.

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