

Congressional Democrats Aim to Prevent Looming Federal Hemp Ban

Minnesota Congressional Democrats Mobilize to Prevent Looming Federal Hemp Ban Threatening State's Thriving Industry

Minnesota congressional Democrats are taking a firm stand to prevent the collapse of the state's hemp industry following the passage and signing of a federal spending bill that effectively bans the sale of most consumable THC products. Lawmakers stressed the urgency of "fixing it" before the new prohibition takes effect next year, highlighting opportunities to create alternative regulatory pathways that protect farmers, small businesses, and consumers.

According to members of the Minnesota delegation, support for preventing the ban extends beyond Democrats. A key GOP leader in the House has reportedly expressed openness to advancing a policy solution that preserves state-level frameworks.

Lawmakers Call for Federal Hemp Policy to Mirror Minnesota's State Regulations Protecting Consumers and Jobs

At a press conference on Monday, Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Tina Smith (D-MN), along with Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), outlined the economic and regulatory stakes of the federal hemp prohibition. They emphasized that instead of a blanket ban, Congress should adopt a regulatory framework similar to Minnesota's, which restricts youth access, ensures product safety, and supports responsible market growth.

Sen. Klobuchar, ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, described the moment as pivotal for Minnesota farmers, workers, and small business owners who have helped build a thriving hemp economy. She highlighted federal grant funding she helped secure for the University of Minnesota to research industrial uses of hemp, including construction materials and pet bedding, but stressed that consumable THC products are a critical part of the state's economic landscape.

Lawmakers Highlight Urgency as Federal Hemp Ban Threatens Jobs, Small Businesses, and Market Stability

"This is about jobs. It's about our small businesses. It's about our breweries and our farmers. Hemp has a strong history in Minnesota," Klobuchar said. "A one-size-fits-all measure in Congress is the last thing we need right now."

She and other delegation members criticized the last-minute legislative tactics used to advance the hemp ban, noting that senators received the massive spending package with cannabis provisions just one day before a vote. The rapid enactment left little opportunity for hearings, constituent feedback, or proper deliberation.

Smith echoed the concerns, stressing that Minnesota's state framework for hemp-derived THC products—including age limits, labeling requirements, and testing standards—is a model of responsible regulation that balances consumer safety with economic opportunity.

Bipartisan Opportunity Emerges as Lawmakers Seek Solutions to Prevent Nationwide Hemp Re-Criminalization

Omar, co-chair of the Congressional Cannabis Caucus, emphasized that federal overreach punishes states like Minnesota that have successfully implemented regulatory systems. She noted that banning consumable hemp products nationwide could destroy jobs, reduce consumer safety, and push demand back into unregulated markets.

According to Omar, some Republican lawmakers—including House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN)—are receptive to supporting state-level frameworks, signaling potential bipartisan avenues to address the prohibition. Meanwhile, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) announced plans to introduce legislation ensuring that state hemp regulations supersede federal law for consumable products.

Industry and Lawmakers Stress Swift Action as One-Year Window to Reverse Ban Narrows

Federal law currently defines legal hemp as products containing less than 0.3% delta-9 THC by dry weight. The new legislation expands the definition to include total THC, including delta-8 and other isomers, and bans consumable products marketed directly to consumers. Legal hemp will be restricted to 0.4 milligrams of total THC per container, with regulatory guidance to be issued by the FDA within 90 days.

Lawmakers and industry stakeholders warned that while the ban won't take effect for a year, the congressional calendar leaves little time to enact corrective legislation or establish an alternative regulatory framework. Failure to act swiftly could devastate Minnesota's hemp economy and disrupt the broader national market for responsibly regulated cannabinoid products.

Federal Hemp Prohibition Faces Criticism from States, Advocates, and Consumer Groups

Opposition to the hemp ban has come from a wide range of stakeholders. Minnesota's Democratic attorney general, Keith Ellison, supported the hemp provisions, citing the importance of regulating state-compliant products. However, critics—including Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD), parents of cannabis patients, veterinarians, and public advocates—have argued that the prohibition is overly broad and could harm economic and public health outcomes.

National retailers, such as Target, have begun piloting cannabis-infused beverages in Minnesota, demonstrating the potential for responsible, legal markets to coexist with public safety measures. Lawmakers stressed that preserving such frameworks is essential to maintaining both economic growth and consumer protection.

Congressional Democrats Outline Options to Mitigate Impact of Federal Hemp Ban Through Farm Bill or Regulatory Amendments

Sen. Klobuchar suggested that amending the federal Farm Bill or other agriculture-related legislation could provide a pathway to reverse or soften the hemp ban. Options include extending the timeline for implementation or adopting Minnesota's existing regulatory framework at the federal level.

Smith and Omar emphasized that Minnesota's model demonstrates how hemp can be safely consumed by adults while preventing youth access, maintaining product safety, and supporting small businesses. They argued that federal policymakers should learn from the state's example rather than impose sweeping restrictions that could dismantle a functioning, responsible market.

Lawmakers Urge Swift, Bipartisan Action to Protect Hemp Jobs, Small Businesses, and Consumers

The Minnesota congressional delegation concluded that time is of the essence. Lawmakers stressed the need to build political support, educate federal colleagues, and advance legislation that balances public safety with economic vitality.

“We can and we should regulate these products, but banning everything nationwide is unacceptable,” Omar said. “Congress needs to fix this quickly to protect small businesses, workers, and consumers. Now is not the time to stop fighting.”

As discussions continue, Sen. Paul and other allies have indicated that forthcoming legislation could establish state-regulated hemp as the primary standard, ensuring that consumable cannabinoid products can continue to thrive under responsible frameworks.

Minnesota Lawmakers Lead Effort to Create a Sensible National Approach to Hemp Regulation

Minnesota's lawmakers are taking a proactive stance to prevent federal hemp prohibition from derailing a growing and responsibly managed industry. By advocating for state-based regulatory models, bipartisan cooperation, and timely legislative action, they aim to protect jobs, maintain consumer safety, and provide certainty for businesses navigating the evolving legal landscape of hemp-derived products.

Stakeholders across the industry remain cautiously optimistic that Congress can implement a solution that preserves innovation and market stability while safeguarding public health and safety.

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