

Gov. of Minnesota Responds to Federal Hemp THC Ban Threat

Minnesota Governor And Congressional Leaders Explore Responses To Impending Federal Hemp THC Ban Threatening Thriving Industry

The governor of Minnesota says the state is actively “exploring” ways to respond to an impending federal ban on hemp THC products, which he described as “very disruptive” to a thriving industry. Top lawmakers from both parties in Minnesota are also reviewing options to protect consumers and stabilize the market as the ban is set to take effect next November.

Minnesota has been at the center of the debate because it was among the first states to implement comprehensive regulations for hemp beverages and edibles, creating a framework that advocates say could serve as a model for federal oversight.

Gov. Tim Walz Says Federal Hemp THC Ban Came As A Surprise And Threatens Minnesota’s Growing Legal Market

At a press conference on Wednesday, Gov. Tim Walz (D) said the inclusion of the ban in a recent federal spending bill was unexpected.

“We’re exploring it,” Walz said. “This was a surprise to everyone that this would be in there. I think we have a thriving industry. While it’s new, we’re starting to see now that our regulatory process...has created opportunities to roll out a legal program.”

Walz acknowledged the federal policy’s disruptive potential for businesses and workers in Minnesota. “This came out of left field to them. They were unprepared for it, and I think we’re still trying to understand what that means,” he said.

Bipartisan Congressional Leaders Review Options To Protect Consumers And Maintain Industry Stability

At the congressional level, House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN) said he had a productive discussion about Minnesota’s hemp economy with state Rep. Nolan West (R) amid the pending federal prohibition.

“We’re working on ways to support consumers and provide industry stability, while holding bad actors accountable,” Emmer said.

Minnesota congressional Democrats—including Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, as well as Rep. Ilhan Omar—have also committed to preventing the collapse of the hemp industry. They argue the spending bill’s ban on consumable THC products must be corrected before recriminalization takes effect next year, advocating for regulatory solutions that ensure safety and prevent youth access.

Lawmakers Argue Federal Ban Undermines State Regulatory Success And Threatens Jobs In Hemp Sector

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, called the situation a “pivotal moment for many farmers, workers and small business owners” in Minnesota. She highlighted the state’s success in regulating the hemp industry and supporting economic growth, including grant funding for the University of Minnesota to explore hemp’s industrial uses.

“Consumables like cannabinoid-infused beverages represent a critical component of the state’s economy that’s creating jobs and should be protected from federal interference,” Klobuchar said.

Rep. Ilhan Omar emphasized the need for a federal regulatory model aligned with Minnesota’s approach. “A one-size-fits-all federal ban punishes our state for doing it the right way, while doing nothing to stop and regulate bad actors elsewhere,” she said.

History Of Federal Hemp Legalization And Efforts To Close Perceived THC Loopholes

Hemp was federally legalized under the 2018 Farm Bill signed by President Donald Trump, with then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) leading the effort. At the time, the law was intended to end criminalization of hemp farming but was not designed to allow consumable products with THC.

McConnell has since worked to close what he considers a “loophole” allowing THC-infused consumables, resulting in language in the latest appropriations legislation banning most consumable hemp products.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) attempted unsuccessfully to remove the hemp ban language from the spending bill, with the majority voting to table his amendment. Paul has since indicated plans to file legislation to protect the hemp industry and allow states to enforce their own regulatory frameworks for THC products.

Urgency Mounts As Stakeholders Seek Bipartisan Solutions To Prevent Industry Collapse

Industry advocates, state officials, and lawmakers stress the short timeline: although the ban will take effect a year after enactment, Congress must act quickly to reverse or modify the policy before the federal prohibition is implemented.

Proposed solutions include bipartisan bills that could provide a robust regulatory model for consumable hemp products, allowing Minnesota and other states to maintain safety standards while preserving market access.

Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC) has filed legislation to strike the contested provisions from the appropriations bill, though some stakeholders worry a unilateral approach could fail. Meanwhile, GOP operative Roger Stone claimed President Trump was “forced” to sign the bill containing the hemp THC ban, though the White

House stated the president supported the language prior to signing.

Diverse Stakeholders Voice Support For State Level Regulation Over Blanket Federal Prohibition

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, along with 38 other state and territory attorneys general, has defended the state's hemp regulations, arguing that federally regulated states should not be disadvantaged by unregulated out-of-state products.

Conversely, Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD), who helped secure the federal hemp ban, has downplayed concerns about economic consequences, describing opposition as “desperate mistruths from an industry that stands to lose billions of dollars by selling intoxicants to children.”

Veterans organizations and medical hemp advocates warn the federal ban could hinder research and eliminate access to therapeutic products, highlighting the widespread implications for both industry and consumers.

Window Remains For Lawmakers To Establish Alternative Regulatory Frameworks Before Federal Prohibition Takes Effect

Lawmakers including Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) note that the year-long window before the ban is implemented could be used to advance legislation creating an alternative, federally recognized regulatory model.

Stakeholders remain cautiously optimistic that bipartisan solutions can preserve consumer access, protect public safety, and allow Minnesota's thriving hemp industry to continue growing despite federal restrictions.

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