

Proposed Ban on Intoxicating Hemp Products in Texas Opens for Public Feedback

For better or worse, changes are looming over the hemp-derived cannabis industry in Texas. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has urged state senators to explore the banning or regulation of delta-8 and delta-9 THC, sparking discussions about the future of these products. In response, the Senate State Affairs Committee will soon open its doors to public testimony regarding the regulation of these intoxicating hemp items.

Background

Hemp gained federal legalization in 2018 with the passage of the Farm Bill, a move mirrored by Texas through House Bill 1325 in 2019. These laws defined hemp as cannabis containing less than 0.3% delta-9 THC, effectively opening the doors for various THC isomers like delta-8. This legislative gap has facilitated the production and distribution of these products across the state.

Impact of Regulation

The proposed scrutiny over intoxicating hemp products in Texas raises concerns and debates among stakeholders. Daryoush Austin Zamhariri, creator of the Texas Cannabis Collective, anticipates arguments against these products during the upcoming hearing. Concerns about child safety, increased ER visits due to THC edibles, and adolescent accessibility to these items are expected to be raised. Moreover, there will likely be discussions on impaired driving and parallels drawn to past issues with synthetic cannabinoids like spice/K2.

Industry Response

While acknowledging the need for additional regulations such as compliance testing and age verification, proponents of hemp-derived cannabis products oppose a blanket ban. Zamhariri highlights the risk of pushing consumers back into the black market with such a move. Instead, industry advocates advocate for a nuanced approach that balances public safety with access to these products.

As Texas stands at a crossroad in cannabis policy, the impending discussions underscore the complexity of regulating hemp-derived cannabis. With federal rescheduling on the horizon, the state faces the challenge of navigating evolving attitudes and policies surrounding cannabis while addressing concerns about public health and safety.