

## Schwarzenegger praises, then vetoes hemp bill

Contributed by Adam Eiding

Waiting until the last possible day to decide, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the California Industrial Hemp Farming Act, AB 1147, late in the day on Sept. 30. This landmark, bipartisan legislation would have established clear guidelines for farming industrial hemp, which is used in a wide variety of everyday consumer products, including food, body care, clothing, paper and auto parts.

Demand for hemp products has been growing rapidly in recent years with the US hemp product market now exceeding \$270 million in estimated annual sales. The new law would have given farmers the ability to legally supply numerous California manufacturers that currently import hemp seed, oil and fiber.

AB 1147 would have established that the cultivation of industrial hemp is legal only if it contains no more than 0.3 percent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). The legislation was jointly authored by Democratic Assemblyman Mark Leno and Republican Assemblyman Chuck Devore. The Act passed in the Senate on Aug. 16 by a vote of 26-13 and in the Assembly on Aug. 21 by a vote of 44-29.

"I appreciate and applaud the Legislature's interest in actually expanding California's economy," wrote the governor in his veto statement. "... I would like to support the expansion of a new agricultural commodity in this State." He encouraged "the Legislature to work with state and federal law enforcement agencies to craft a measure."

"It's unfortunate that Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed AB 1147. We had looked forward to the hemp oil and seed in our products being grown and produced right here in California," says David Bronner, Chair of the Hemp Industries Association's Food and Oil Committee and President of Alpsnack/Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps. "Farmers in California, like farmers all across the United States, are always looking for profitable crops like hemp to add to their rotation. This veto clearly points out why HR 3037, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2005, needs to be passed on the Federal level."

"Governor Schwarzenegger's veto is a let down for thousands of farmers, business people, and consumers that want to bring back industrial hemp to California to create jobs, new tax income and to benefit the environment," says Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp, the nation's leading industrial hemp farming advocacy group.

"His veto message shows he knew industrial hemp is an economic development and agriculture issue, but ... AB 1147 would have reigned in the over reach by federal authorities." He added with a shrug, "Industrial hemp will continue to be the only crop that is legal to import, sell and consume, but illegal to grow, in California."

Vote Hemp is a non-profit organization dedicated to the free market for industrial hemp and to changing the law to allow US farmers to grow low-THC industrial hemp. More information about hemp legislation and the crop's many uses can be found at [VoteHemp.com](http://VoteHemp.com). BETA SP and DVD Video News Release featuring footage of hemp farming in other countries is available upon request by calling 202-744-2671.