

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

January 23, 2020

Mr. Bruce Summers
Administrator
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20228

Dear Mr. Summers:

We write today concerning the Commonwealth of Virginia's recent submission of its Plan to Regulate Hemp Production. In the interest of ensuring the success of Virginia's burgeoning hemp industry, we encourage USDA to review the Commonwealth's plan expeditiously to provide growers across Virginia the certainty they require entering the 2020 growing season.

Virginia is poised to be a top producer of industrial hemp in the country. In 2019, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) registered over 1,200 growers to produce approximately 2,200 acres of industrial hemp. We expect these figures to grow substantially in 2020 and beyond. Industrial hemp presents an unprecedented opportunity for Virginia producers, and it is critically important that state and federal guidelines provide certainty and security to our farmers.

Expeditious review of Virginia's Plan to Regulate Hemp Production is needed to provide VDACS and other state agencies with the information they need to run an effective hemp program for the 2020 growing season. In addition, the Virginia General Assembly is currently in session, and if any deficiencies that require legislative updates are found in the Commonwealth's plan, a quick review and response would be helpful to guide the legislature. Virginia's General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn in early March 2020, which provides a relatively narrow window of opportunity for the legislature to address any potential deficiencies. If Virginia's Hemp Production Plan is not processed in a timely manner, we are concerned this could cause complications for the Commonwealth's hemp program and our producers, who are eager to take advantage of this exciting opportunity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the development of a viable U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program. Please let us know if we can be of assistance moving forward.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator