



# PRESS RELEASE

**KENTUCKY HOUSE OF  
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## **Rep. Henderson, Commissioner Comer stand in support of industrial hemp bill**

**Frankfort** – Appearing together in the Capitol Rotunda with dozens of supporters from across the state, state Rep. Richard Henderson and Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner James Comer said today they would work to pass Rep. Henderson’s legislation that would set the stage to make industrial hemp legal to grow in Kentucky.

“The time has come for Kentucky to again take advantage of a crop that has so much potential not just for our farmers, but for manufacturers of hundreds of products that industrial hemp can make,” said Rep. Henderson, D-Jeffersonville. “Kentucky led the nation in its production in the 1800s, and there is every reason to believe we could do the same again if my bill becomes law.”

“I am honored to join with Representative Henderson and so many of my former colleagues in support of legislation which could ultimately allow Kentucky farmers to produce industrial hemp,” Commissioner Comer said. “Our farmers and members of the agriculture community are missing out on too many economic opportunities and I am excited to support bold new ideas that will create jobs and kick-start our economy.”

Rep. Keith Hall, D-Phelps, who is a primary co-sponsor of the legislation, said he “is particularly interested in the energy side of the hemp equation,” whether that is producing alcohol automotive fuels from the whole plant or growing it on mine reclamation sites. The automotive industry could also use it to replace plastic in cars today, he said.

If passed, and subject to federal authorization, Rep. Henderson’s bill would call on potential hemp farmers to apply to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture for permits lasting just one year. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture would oversee crop production by the farmer. Applicants would have to submit to a nationwide criminal background check, and those convicted of a felony within the last 10 years would be barred from applying.

Industrial hemp can be used to make everything from paper and carpeting to medicine and food and even bio-fuels. Interest in its production in Kentucky picked up in the early 1990s, and a dozen years ago, the Kentucky Industrial Hemp Commission was formed to oversee research in the crop. Under Rep. Henderson’s legislation, the Commissioner of Agriculture would become the commission’s chairman.

“We have done a lot of study over the years, but now is the time to act,” Rep. Henderson said. “We’re fortunate to have a tremendous amount of diversity in farming here in Kentucky, but this would make the agricultural community even stronger. Commissioner Comer and I think the time has come to move forward with this once and for all.”