

Dear Industrial Hemp Research Pilot ListServ members,

Welcome to the Industrial Hemp Research Pilot (IHRP) ListServ! I wanted to send out a quick email to introduce myself and tell you a little about where we are with IH pilot program.

Unlike many other states, the state of Washington legislature provided a small budget to have a full-time, limited-duration Industrial Hemp coordinator position to help begin the Industrial Hemp Research Pilot in the state of Washington. What does this mean for you? Well, it means that you will have a person working full-time on the Industrial Hemp Research Pilot! I won't be dividing my time between any other agricultural projects. The Industrial Hemp Research Pilot will be my sole focus. My main goal is to bring all interested parties together to facilitate the best IHRP in the country!

So, where are we at with the IHRP process? The "Hemp Bill," ESSB 6206, was passed in February of this year. The link to that bill can be found [here](#). The filing and approval of the [CR-101](#) happened on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. I was hired shortly thereafter. We are at the very beginning stages of the creation of the IHRP. If you are receiving this email, it's because you are one of the very first interested parties involved in the process!

What's next for the IHRP? There are various steps coming-up in order to get the IHRP off the ground, but likely one of the most important is the Rule-making process. If you are interested, a breakdown of what the Rule-making process entails can be found [here](#). Basically, it is up to you to help to create the IHRP you want! This is done through the collaboration and input of all interested parties. There will be open comment periods and open, in-person meetings so that everyone may have a say in the creation of this new program. The rules and regulations that result from these meetings will then be written and entered into the official record for the state.

The state legislature has also mandated some things that **must** happen in order to create an IHRP. For example, an application must be created for individuals and businesses who wish to apply to grow or process hemp. A licensing structure must be created, and licenses issued, for those approved to grow hemp in the state of Washington. It would be helpful to read the [bill](#) and familiarize yourself with what things are required by law.

Another interesting challenge with the IHRP is the acquisition of hemp seeds. Since the plant genus, Cannabis, that hemp belongs to is still federally illegal, no part of the plant, including its seeds, can cross the borders between any states. Once the seeds cross state lines, they become the jurisdiction of the federal government. So, for example, getting seeds from Oregon or Colorado would be federally illegal! So, even though the federal government has carved out a small, legal niche to start legal pilot hemp programs within the states under the [2014 Farm Bill](#), they did not write-in any language that allowed for the movement of seeds. They also didn't provide an avenue for people to get federal funding to study hemp agriculture.

We will be talking a lot about seeds in the future, but it seems very likely that, like many other states, we will have to apply for a federal permit to import seeds from Canada and Europe. While this is a somewhat cumbersome process, it also could turn out to be a beneficial accident. Canada and Europe have viable, working industrial hemp programs. Hemp there is mainly grown and treated like any other agricultural program- beans, or corn, or tomatoes, or hops. So, imported seeds have known germination rates, planting depths, plant heights, and other important agronomic qualities. Many of the hemp seeds being grown in the U.S. currently, that were not imported from abroad, have low-yields and unknown varietal traits that make them tricky to grow reliably.

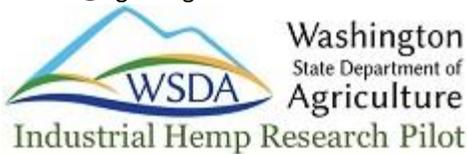
Due to the federal permit requirements, rule-making and public comment period requirements, and hemp growing-season limitations, the earliest I foresee industrial hemp being planted in the state of Washington is early spring 2017. Obviously, since this program is so new, that timeline may change. If, for example, the federal permit process goes quickly and the Rule-making process goes smoothly, there may be a chance of getting seeds in time to try for a fall hemp crop research project or an indoor-grow hemp research project. No guarantees can be made, though, as there are too many unknowns. However, rest assured that I will be working tirelessly to not only get good-quality seeds for Washington hemp growers, but also, with your help, to create an IH program that will serve the needs of all Washington hemp growers long into the future!

In the coming weeks, I will be sending out a FAQ sheet that discusses some questions and concerns I have already received. If you have a question or concern that you would like addressed in the FAQ, please feel free to email me at [efebles@agr.wa.gov](mailto:efebles@agr.wa.gov). I will also be sending out a list of web resources that will be useful to you. These resources will likely include links to other state hemp pilot programs, academic research on hemp, and other useful links.

Thank you, sincerely, for your interest in the Industrial Hemp Research Pilot for the state of Washington. It is not every day that a new agricultural program is created and I feel fortunate to be involved in such historic and momentous endeavor. I look forward to working with all of you as we move through this process.

Best,

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