

Posoh mawaw Niwak, nekatow manawich kikitem (Hello everyone, I am going to speak). My name is Marcus Grignon, and I am the Executive Director of Hempstead Project Heart, a non-profit organization dedicated to redeveloping thriving hemp economies that connect tribal, urban, and rural communities throughout the United States. Hempstead Project Heart is a member of the Rural Coalition, the Peace Development Fund, and the National Hemp Association's Standing Committee of Hemp Organizations. I've come before you today to testify on the USDA Hemp Production Program. I am also here for the American pioneers who pushed our country towards acceptance of hemp: Alex White Plume, Chris Boucher, Jack Herer, Barbara Filippone, and Richard Rose.

Hemp has a conflicting past in our country. From the founding of our nation and lead up to the passage of the Controlled Substances Act, hemp was considered a cash crop and useful for our military during World War II. After passage of the Controlled Substances Act, hemp became defined as a drug and non-useful. Both of which is untrue. The best way I've educated the American people over the last six years on the difference between hemp and marijuana is an analogy of the pepper family. With peppers you have habanero, chipotle, ghost pepper, jalapeno---these peppers is what I would call your "high-grade marijuana." Whereas green, yellow, and red bell peppers is what I would call your "hemp." Both peppers are part of the same family, but distinctly different.

The historical perspective of hemp played a large role in building our country during the early years of our democracy. Many states such as Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, and Wisconsin to name a few have rich histories of hemp playing a vital role in their economies. From 1902 to 1944, the USDA studied hemp extensively as a solution to our country's fiber shortage. Lyster Dewey led this research for USDA. Dewey with the help of Dr. Andrew Wright and Senator Alexander Wiley created the 20th century American hemp industry. Through their research, they uncovered: 1) $\frac{3}{4}$ of the land in the United States can grow hemp; 2) Hemp grows well with crop rotations; 3) Hemp's long tap root penetrates the soil and loosens the undersoil layers; 4) Drying kilns for hemp fiber should not exceed 150 degrees Fahrenheit. There is a wealth of knowledge on how to produce and process hemp from these records at the National Agricultural Library.

My path as an American hemp farmer is not linear. I began my journey as a hemp researcher in 2015 for my tribal nation, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, and the College of Menominee Nation, an institution of higher education. We grew hemp on our homelands for research purposes to spur economic development for our people under section 7606 of the 2014 Farm Bill and under guidance of the Department of Justice's Wilkensen Memorandum. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful due to federal overreach by the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) raid on our hemp crop in October 2015. Under the auspices of a marijuana raid on tribal lands, the DEA took our hemp crop at harvest time that had seed with one year acclimation to the Great Lakes region. Even our topsoil was seized by a bulldozer. We never received test results from DEA to prove our hemp had tested over the legal limit.

After the 2015 growing season, I dedicated myself to be an education advocate and push for hemp to be relegalized in Wisconsin and the United States through Hempstead Project Heart. As part of a coalition of Americans, we pushed for hemp to be legal again and were successful in Wisconsin in 2017. In 2018, our coalition focused on the 2018 Farm Bill to revise section 7606, make hemp fully legal in the United States, and uphold tribal sovereignty for the 574 tribal nations within our country to grow hemp without federal interference. We were successful and for the committee members I testify before today, I say Waewaenen (thank you) for your support.

The summer of 2019, hemp came back to the Menominee Reservation. Our research focused on integrated pest management in hemp production. We were able to identify various pests and pollinators during the growing season. It is truly amazing to observe the growing cycle of hemp and watch the tree frogs, bees, aphids, lady bugs, and Japanese beetles show up at different times. This research in 2019 laid the groundwork for our current research on the effects of Japanese beetles on hemp production through the USDA Sustainable Agriculture, Research, and Education program.

In 2020, the Native American Agriculture Fund, a foundation created by the Keepseagle settlement, awarded the College of Menominee Nation and Hempstead Project Heart a grant to develop a hemp fiber feasibility study and begin to acclimate a hemp fiber variety in the Great Lakes region. We are in our third and final year of research for this grant. The Chairman of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Ron Corn Sr., supports Hempstead Project Heart's efforts to spur hemp research, production, and product development on the Menominee Reservation.

As the 2023 Farm Bill is upon us, I want to advocate to strengthen the hemp production provisions from the 2018 Farm Bill. 1) There needs to be separation between the definition and regulation of industrial hemp from cannabinoid or floral hemp. These crops are easily differentiated with a visual inspection. The industry advocates for a grain and fiber exemption from testing and background checks for the producer; 2) bank regulations need revision to ease current restrictions for hemp operations. It is difficult to find a bank that will take business accounts connected to hemp production and processing; 3) There needs to be a USDA stamp of approval for hemp being shipped between the various jurisdictions in the United States. This will help with any issues that arise with interstate commerce. While these suggestions do not cover all the needed changes, these top three will enhance the American hemp industry, ease burdensome regulations for farmers, and create more demand for hemp made materials.

The reemergence of the hemp industry is a renewal of our American traditions. Our country prospered on the production of hemp, and we can do it again. Today, many Americans from all walks of life are at the forefront of rebuilding the American hemp industry. Barbara Filippone and Summer Star Haeske of Envirotexiles, a successful USDA Bio-Preferred company that works on various hemp fiber products and supplies the fashion industry with high quality hemp textiles. Aaron Rydell and Greg Wilson of HempWood, a hemp building materials company that specializes in the first HempWood flooring. Mike McGuire of Western Fiber, who built a hemp processing plant by retrofitting a cotton gin. Ken Anderson and Colin Felton of Bast Fiber Products created composite decking made from hemp fiber. All these innovative American entrepreneurs need the support of Congress to grow the hemp industry in our country. We look forward to stronger hemp provisions in the 2023 Farm Bill.

As I wrap up my testimony today, I want to leave you all with a historical perspective by Lyster Dewey. In 1939, Dewey wrote in a report to the Chief of the Bureau of Plant Industry, "The future of the hemp industry in this country seems to depend largely on the development of strains/varieties of hemp free from marijuana." Dewey knew in 1939 America would need to develop their own hemp varieties to grow the industry and not depend on international seed supplies. The 2023 Farm Bill is our opportunity to ease restrictions, spur economic development in our communities, and innovate the products we need to fill the gaps in our supply chains. I ask Congress to strengthen the hemp provisions in the 2023 Farm Bill to open the door for creativity and innovation to propel the American hemp industry into the 21st century.

Waewaenen (Thank you) for your time and yield the floor.