

United States Senate

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

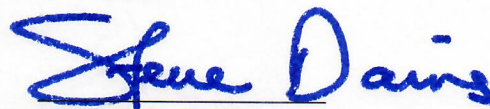
I write to request the U.S. Department of Agriculture swiftly implement regulations facilitating the commercial cultivation and processing of industrial hemp as outlined in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill).

As you are aware, one significant provision to many Montana farmers is removing hemp from the jurisdiction of the Controlled Substances Act and creating a USDA-administered program to oversee hemp cultivation and processing. Under this statute, USDA is to establish a regulatory framework and monitor compliance of hemp production. The 2018 Farm Bill mandates states and tribal governments wanting primary regulatory authority over hemp production must submit a plan to USDA for approval. Many Montana farmers are eager to begin hemp production under this new regulatory framework. To ensure the state remains within full compliance of federal law, the Montana Department of Agriculture promptly submitted their proposal for Montana hemp production on February 28, 2019.

Recently, USDA has stated the hemp regulatory framework will not be released until fall 2019. In the interim, states like Montana are reliant on outdated provisions from the 2014 Farm Bill which restrict hemp production to institutions of higher education and state departments of agriculture as allowed by state laws. Furthermore, without USDA regulations, Montana farmers will face substantial uncertainty regarding the regulatory framework for hemp production, including eligibility for crop insurance.

I urge USDA to provide clarity for hemp producers throughout Montana by quickly proposing a regulatory framework as intended by Congress. I appreciate USDA's continued commitment to implementing the 2018 Farm Bill and look forward to working with you to support Montana agriculture and efforts to facilitate hemp production.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator