

U.S. Hemp Roundtable

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VIA EMAIL

March 10, 2022

Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan
Director
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: U.S. Hemp Roundtable Opposition to NSF Policy of Not Funding Hemp Industry Technologies

Dear Director Panchanathan:

I serve as general counsel to the U.S. Hemp Roundtable, the hemp industry's leading national advocacy organization. Hemp is legally recognized as an agricultural commodity, in particular because of its multitude of uses across dozens of commercial sectors and technology areas, including textiles. The dozens of members of the Roundtable stand at the forefront of maximizing the versatile hemp plant through industrious, innovative, and science-focused technologies, including carbon-recapture and sustainable hemp production and product manufacturing practices.

The Roundtable was dismayed when it recently learned that that the NSF's Congressionally mandated Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs will not support development of any technologies connected to the hemp industry, even when a technology would involve non-propagative hemp parts, such as hemp stalks or spent waste (as opposed to floral materials or extracts).

In summary, the 2018 Farm Bill—federal law for more than three years—legalizes the production of hemp throughout the United States, removes hemp and tetrahydrocannabinols in hemp from the federal controlled substances schedules, and protects hemp and hemp products throughout interstate commerce. The federal legality of hemp, including all derivatives, extracts, and cannabinoids of the plant, is not in question. We are not aware of any federal law or regulation that authorizes or validates the NSF's decision to not support hemp technologies.

In fact, the Consolidated Appropriations Acts since enactment of the 2018 Farm Bill have barred federally appropriated agencies from using federal funds to prohibit the transportation, processing, sale, or use of hemp. Further, the 2018 Farm Bill expands federal crop insurance and research and competitive grant funding programs for supplemental and alternative crops to include hemp. The NSF's unfortunate decision to deny research-and-development funding for the use of hemp is inconsistent with Congress's clear intent to incentivize, promote, and protect hemp production and hemp products, and possibly violative of federal law.

More troubling, the NSF's decision is contrary to scientific and economic data that hemp can play a critical role in growing America's economy, creating significant opportunities for American farmers and businesses, and meeting market demand. While the Roundtable thanks the NSF for funding startup endeavors across the country, few opportunities have the potential to

positively benefit society and to lead to significant commercial outcomes as hemp. Until funding is made available to hemp technologies, the NSF will fall short of fully fulfilling its Congressional mandate.

The Roundtable implores the NSF to reverse its policy of not funding hemp industry technologies. We would appreciate an opportunity to speak at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Miller

General Counsel

U.S. Hemp Roundtable

2022 U.S. HEMP ROUNDTABLE

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