

New Regulations Expand Hemp Program to Commercial Growers in Maryland

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ANNAPOLIS, Md. – The Maryland Department of Agriculture has adopted new regulations that will expand the state's industrial hemp program. The new regulations (COMAR 15.01.17.01-.18) bring the state's program into compliance with provisions of the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill, and will establish industrial hemp as an agricultural commodity.

"Hemp is an emerging agricultural commodity that presents a new opportunity for farmers looking to diversify their operations," said Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. "We have seen significant interest in the first two years of the Industrial Hemp Research Pilot Program and we are excited to expand the state's hemp industry with the new Hemp Farming Program."

Under the new Hemp Farming Program, growers may apply to produce and cultivate hemp for commercial purposes. In previous years, Maryland growers have only been able to produce hemp under the department's Industrial Hemp Research Pilot Program.

In January 2019, the department began accepting applications for its Industrial Hemp Research Pilot Program. The pilot program is the result of Maryland House Bill 698, a 2018 state law that required growers to partner with the department or an institution of higher learning to grow industrial hemp for research purposes.

Applications for both programs' 2021 growing season will be announced and posted on the program's [website](#) in the coming weeks. For more information on both programs, please contact Jim Drews at jim.drews@maryland.gov or 410-841-5962.

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