

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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Kelly Cooper, Assembly President
Wayne Ogle, Vice President

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kelly Cooper, Assembly President
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

FROM: Brandii Holmdahl

DATE: February 2, 2017

RE: Resolution 2017-018, Supporting the Enactment of Senate Bill No. 6 Relating to Industrial Hemp and Controlled Substances (Holmdahl)

The first law concerning industrial hemp was drafted in Jamestown in 1619 ordering farmers to dedicate part of their land to the crop. This law was continued through the formation of colonies and created a thriving industry for rope, paper and clothing by the mid-1800's. The first two drafts of the US Constitution were written on hemp paper. It wasn't until 1937 and the "Marijuana Tax Act" that prohibitive legislation was aimed at hemp production. This, and subsequent laws did not consider levels of THC or different strains of the plant. Despite this law, in 1942 a USDA film was produced entitled "Hemp for Victory" to promote the growth of industrial hemp to help aid the war effort. After the war, efforts increased toward banning hemp, largely funded by the cotton industry and by 1957 there was a nationwide ban on hemp production.

Since 1999, 30 states have passed laws allowing the cultivation of industrial hemp. Harvests have taken place in Hawaii, Vermont and Colorado. Alaska SB 6 follows the approach taken in these states and sets a THC limit of .03%.

Jack Bennet presented a variety of Industrial Hemp projects and uses to us at the assembly meeting in Homer. I have heard his presentation three times since that meeting. I believe that there are opportunities to increase economic diversity on the Kenai Peninsula and throughout Alaska if we allow communities to develop industrial hemp farming.