

**WTE column of April 2, 2015. Editor's headline: "Mead should be high on hemp"
CST column of April 7: "Why wouldn't the governor sign hemp extract bill?"**

In recent coverage of bills signed into law by Governor Mead, the WTE included Hemp Extract Bill HB 32. This is inaccurate. Governor Mead did not sign the bill. Since he didn't go so far as to veto it, HB 32 became law by default.

Question: Why would a governor not sign a bill that makes CBD oil available to individuals suffering painful recurrences of epileptic seizures that do not respond to treatment with pharmaceuticals? CBD treatment has achieved phenomenal results in other states, as documented by a 60-Minutes segment late last year.

CBD is produced from the leaves of cannabis sativa, the hemp plant that, in contrast to its psychoactive cousin marijuana, contains only trace amounts of THC (the cannabinol that's present of up to 25% in marijuana).

State Rep. Robert McKim, R-Afton, and his co-sponsors patterned their bill after Utah's Charlee's Law, enacted last year, which in turn was patterned after Colorado's Charlotte's Web. Each enactment was followed by laws permitting agricultural hemp production.

Charlee's Law and Charlotte's Web were named after seizure-prone little girls. The 60-Minutes segment on Charlotte's Webb highlighted families with epileptic children who moved to Colorado to avail the treatment to their little ones. Colorado farmers started growing hemp in 2012; today, a handful of Colorado entrepreneurs manufacture the life-enhancing CBD—which, incidentally, is also effective in the treatment of migraine headaches, nausea from cancer treatment, and many other afflictions.

Again: Why did Governor Mead refuse to sign this beneficial piece of legislature? It seems that Attorney General Peter Michael warned the governor: even products containing traces of THC are included in the definition of Schedule 1 drugs; hence, they must be considered illegal.

In actual fact, the Agricultural Act of 2014 encourages production of hemp under its Section 7606, which stipulates that any state where it is legal to do so may cultivate hemp "[n]otwithstanding the Controlled Substances Act." In addition, late in 2014 the feds defunded DEA's "war on marijuana" (which yet includes industrial hemp). Further, a lawsuit nearing judgment in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California is projected to declare marijuana's inclusion in Schedule 1 unconstitutional. Along similar lines, Congress has a bill underway to shift marijuana from Schedule 1 into Schedule 2, which would permit research into marijuana's medically beneficial properties.

The Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015 that is making its way through Congress, if enacted, will amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude industrial hemp from its definition of "marihuana." It defines "industrial hemp" to mean the plant cannabis sativa and/or any part thereof with THC concentrations of no more than 0.3 percent. It deems

cannabis sativa to meet that concentration limit whenever a person grows or processes it in accordance with state laws. After decades of conflation, the farm act legally distinguishes industrial hemp from marijuana. It defines hemp as an agricultural product rather than a drug, which effectively frees American farmers to grow hemp without having to worry over DEA interference. The United States has been the only industrialized country that bans hemp while consuming the lion's share of the world's hemp products. However, the production tide is turning.

Thus, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Union, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, have enacted policies in support of hemp research and development.

Wyoming's Attorney General is himself known to be an organic gardener. That hemp is an organic crop should ring a sympathetic chord. It thrives without fertilizer and, since its rapid growth displaces weeds, matures without herbicide. Hemp is a soil-stabilizing plant that helps replace petroleum-based plastics—already hemp is present in BMW and Dodge door panels. Raising hemp modifies our GMO monoculture, helping reverse environmental degradation.

Author Doug Fine notes in “Hemp Bound” that Colorado biomass fuels consultant Agua Das, and Colorado School of Mines engineer Thomas B. Reed, report that an acre of hemp can produce power equivalent to a thousand gallons of gasoline.

Meanwhile, China is busy replacing its cotton crops with hemp. Why? Cotton's monster water needs and obscene pesticide footprint—according to Pesticide Action Network, cotton uses 25 percent of the world's pesticides—have rendered cotton production uneconomical in China.

The industrial world has had a two-decade head start on the hemp revival over the U.S. Canadian hemp farmers profit to the tune of \$250 per acre, compared with \$30-100 for wheat. Canadian Hemp Alliance says it has doubled its acreage in the last few years, partly because 90 percent of its hemp goes to U.S. imports. Wyoming farmers, too, deserve to reap these benefits.

History has taught us that government meddling in markets is injurious to innovation. It's high time our state exclude industrial hemp from its Schedule 1 drugs, opening hemp choices to Wyoming farmers and investors.