

Board of Directors

Michael Rubin*
Chairman
Jim O'Connell*
Co-President
Gene Kingsbury*
Co-President
Jean Findlay*
*Treasurer/
Vice President*
Tom Leedy
Secretary
Oakley Johnson*
*Immediate Past
President*
Sharon Bauer
Carole Bergmann
Tina Brown
Amanda Cather
Denise Cohen
Diana Conway*
Leslie Cronin
Anne Davies
Scott Fosler
Tom Hartsock
Mary Kingsley
Lee Langstaff
Cindy McGrath
Mark Mills
Dolores Milmoie*
Martin Radigan
Gwen Reese
William Sheehan*

*Executive Committee

Dr. Royce Hanson
*Advisory Committee
Chair*

Staff

Caroline Taylor
Executive Director
caroline@mocoalliance.org

Kristina Bostick
Senior Conservation
Associate
kristina@mocoalliance.org

Ellen Letourneau
Volunteer and
Outreach Coordinator
ellen@mocoalliance.org

Comments – HB 902 – Hemp Cultivation in Maryland: It's Time

Preamble: Hemp is not marijuana per chemical science

On behalf of Montgomery Countryside Alliance and nearly 150 producers in Montgomery County's 100,000 acre Agricultural Reserve, I ask that our legislators vote favorably on HB 902. Our farms need more opportunity to diversify and improve their bottom line. Economic vitality is critical to preserving Maryland's farmland.

Hemp! Yes, this crop provides real potential for boosting our agricultural economy, improving soil and water quality, and bringing end consumer businesses to Maryland. Just ask our friends at Lady Farmer who seek to locally source fiber for their newly launched farm friendly garment biz! Or ask auto manufacturers who make interior car parts from hemp. The list of end products is extraordinary. We have fallen behind other states (including VA) that are moving forward quickly and profitably with this multi-purpose crop. Time to get busy and catch up.

<https://www.google.com/amp/www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka/2013/05/29/industrial-hemp-a-win-win-for-the-economy-and-the-environment/amp/?client=safari>

A number of us went to meet with MD Secretary of Agriculture recently to press for the opportunity to grow hemp in MD. (Thanks to our Delegate David Frasier-Hidalgo for facilitating the meeting.) The Agriculture Department's AG delivered his opinion that additional legislation would be required to allow for hemp cultivation on private farm acreage. Delegate David Frasier-Hidalgo has been working for several years to facilitate this opportunity and thus drafted the legislation that garnered early and widespread support from his colleagues.

This is about economic opportunity and agricultural and environmental resilience. It's about diversification and innovation. It's about time frankly. Pass HB 902

Respectfully,



Caroline Taylor
Executive Director



GREATER WASHINGTON