



# NJ Assembly Committee Considers Bill Shifting Intoxicating Hemp Regulation to Department of Agriculture

In the News

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A recent informational hearing held by the NJ Assembly Agriculture Committee focused on Bill A 5058, which proposes transferring the regulation of intoxicating hemp products from the NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission (NJCRC) to the Department of Agriculture. The bill, introduced by Assembly Committee Chair William Spearman and Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak, aims to create a regulated hemp market, including hemp-derived beverages, while also addressing concerns from the liquor industry about how these products should be regulated.

Archer partner **Bill Caruso**, a leading cannabis advocate, was quoted extensively during the hearing, voicing strong opposition to the bill. Bill emphasized that the current regulatory framework, designed specifically for cannabis, should not be abandoned. He criticized the idea of regulating intoxicating hemp like alcohol, noting that hemp products are created through a legal loophole in the Farm Bill and have different safety concerns than alcohol.

Bill also stressed that the NJ cannabis industry already has robust safety standards in place to protect minors, and altering the current structure could undermine those protections. He argued that a system already exists for regulating cannabis products, and it would be unwise to duplicate efforts or risk complicating matters further.

The bill's proponents, including lobbyists from the alcohol industry, suggested that hemp beverages should be regulated similarly to alcohol, with certain regulatory carve-outs. They argued that the Department of Agriculture was better suited to handle the regulation of hemp drinks, especially given its historical role in overseeing hemp.

The hearing highlighted a divide between those advocating for a shift in regulation and those, like Bill, who believe the existing system is more equipped to ensure consumer safety and maintain consistency across cannabis and hemp products.

Bill's comments reaffirmed the need for a unified approach to cannabis regulation in New Jersey, advocating for flexibility within the current system while protecting public health and safety.

For more details on the hearing and Bill's position on the bill, read the full article [here](#).

## Related People



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