

1 A RESOLUTION encouraging the creation of a task force to assist Kentucky
2 tobacco farmers in transitioning to industrial hemp production.

3 WHEREAS, industrial hemp, a variety of the Cannabis sativa plant, has a storied
4 past in Kentucky history, as the plant has been grown in the Commonwealth for nearly
5 250 years; and

6 WHEREAS, Kentucky was the largest producer of hemp in the United States during
7 the 19th and 20th centuries, when the Commonwealth was the source of three-fourths of
8 the United States' hemp fiber production; and

9 WHEREAS, due to federal restrictions, the cultivation of hemp in America was
10 hindered in recent decades until the 2018 Farm Bill removed industrial hemp from the
11 federal Controlled Substances Act and gave hemp growers access to United States
12 Department of Agriculture programs such as crop insurance; and

13 WHEREAS, the global industrial hemp market was estimated at nearly \$4 billion in
14 2017, and is expected to grow precipitously to an estimated \$10 billion by 2025; and

15 WHEREAS, the growing global demand for hemp-based products of all stripes is
16 expected to drive market growth over the coming years, particularly hemp-based food
17 items, cannabidiol (CBD) oils and oil products, and commercial products made from
18 hemp fibers; and

19 WHEREAS, agriculture in Kentucky is undergoing a period of transformation
20 marked by changing markets, new products, shifting consumer demand, and
21 technological developments; and

22 WHEREAS, domestic demand for tobacco and tobacco products has decreased
23 significantly over the previous decades, leaving Kentucky tobacco farmers struggling to
24 shift to alternative crops in order to remain economically viable; and

25 WHEREAS, Kentucky tobacco farmers harvested approximately 68,000 acres of
26 tobacco in 2018, which is down roughly 70 percent from the 226,000 acres harvested two
27 decades ago; and

1 WHEREAS, the same fertile soil and excellent climate conditions in Kentucky that
2 allow tobacco plants to thrive in the Commonwealth are also highly suitable to the
3 Cannabis sativa plant; and

4 WHEREAS, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture recently approved 1,035
5 applications to cultivate up to 42,086 acres of industrial hemp in 2019, which is an
6 exponential increase from the 210 approved applications and 16,100 approved acres in
7 2018; and

8 WHEREAS, despite some challenges in growing industrial hemp for the first time,
9 some Kentucky farmers are finding that mediocre hemp crops are yielding better returns
10 than excellent tobacco crops; and

11 WHEREAS, with the assistance of the General Assembly, industrial hemp can play
12 a vital role in helping Kentucky farmers who no longer wish to grow tobacco shift to a
13 new crop with growing demand, profitable yields, and endless possibilities;

14 NOW, THEREFORE,

15 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***
16 ***Kentucky:***

17 ➔Section 1. The Senate hereby encourages the President of this Honorable Body
18 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to create a task force to offer
19 recommendations on how to assist Kentucky's tobacco farmers who wish to transition
20 from the production of tobacco to the production of industrial hemp.

21 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate shall send a copy of this Resolution to
22 Senator Julian M. Carroll.