



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 8, 2019

Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
Phone: (601) 359-1163
E-mail: paige@mdac.ms.gov

Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force Holds First Meeting

JACKSON, Miss. — The Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force convened today at the State Capitol. The Task Force, chaired by Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson, was established by the Mississippi Legislature to consider the potential of hemp cultivation, market potential, and potential job creation in Mississippi.

The Task Force and members of the public heard presentations on various topics regarding hemp including the regulation and cultivation of hemp, the University of Mississippi Cannabis Research Program, and law enforcement concerns related to hemp. Task Force members formed four committees as they move forward in focusing on various areas of hemp production: Regulations and Monitoring; Economics, Marketing, and Job Creation; Hemp Agronomy; and Law Enforcement Concerns. Each committee will report their findings at the next scheduled meeting.

“Today was the beginning of many thoughtful, evidence-based discussions that the members of the Task Force will be having as we examine all the issues surrounding the cultivation of hemp in Mississippi. We will be thoroughly exploring both the opportunities and the challenges of producing hemp in the state,” said Commissioner Gipson. “In all our considerations, we will keep a keen focus on the interests of Mississippians, including our farmers, law enforcement and other stakeholders, as well as the general public.”

The Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force was created by House Bill 1547 enacted during the 2019 Regular Legislative Session. Members of the Task Force are as follows:

- Andy Gipson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce
- Wes Burger, Mississippi State University
- Edmund Buckner, Alcorn State University
- Larry Walker, University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy National Center for Natural Products Research
- Paul Dees, Delta Council
- Brittany Ridinger, Mississippi Secretary of State's Office
- Mike Lanford, Mississippi Attorney General's Office
- Meg Pearson, Mississippi State Department of Health

Bill Pigott, Mississippi House of Representatives
Josh Harkins, Mississippi Senate
Marshall Fisher, Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety
Andy Whittington, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
John Dowdy, Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics Director (Governor Designee)

The meeting was available for viewing through livestreaming on the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's Facebook page. A recorded video from the meeting along with presentations will be made available at <https://www.mdac.ms.gov/hemp-cultivation-task-force/> in the coming days. The public can submit comments by emailing MSHempTaskForce@mdac.ms.gov.

The next meeting date of the Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force will be September 25, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 113 of the Mississippi State Capitol.

###



The Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force, chaired by Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson, convened today at the State Capitol. The Task Force and members of the public heard presentations on various topics regarding hemp including the regulation and cultivation of hemp, the University of Mississippi Cannabis Research Program, and law enforcement concerns related to hemp.