

CANNABIS AND HEMP association



The Potential Impact of the DOJ Memo to US Attorneys Allowing Native American Tribes to Set Precedence on Cannabis Policy.

October 28, 2014 the US Department of Justice issued a letter to all US attorneys to clarify how the Federal Government will approach cannabis dispensaries in sovereign Native American states. [This letter is attached]

The letter is open to interpretation and we are discussing some of the possibilities this could mean for Native Americans and looking at some of the pros and cons of the ruling based on how some are interpreting it.

Some popular themes being mentioned in the media:

- Native American tribes are technically sovereign states, like Washington D.C. They have the right to set up their own policy in the matter.
- Law enforcement for Native American tribes is handled differently on a tribe by tribe basis. They often their own force, assistance from the state, and Federal government. A mix of any (3) variations of law enforcement are possible. Ie. Some tribes may be 100% state protected, 100% self-enforced, etc. it can vary widely across the nation.
- There are 556 Native American tribes nationally, of which 320+ are federally recognized. Essentially each tribe can write its' own cannabis laws and operate separately.
- Some of these tribes already have a thriving gambling business and how these two industries will work separately or together is one dynamic the CHA is interested in.
- Native American tribes have above average statistics for drug and alcohol abuse, many are concerned about the impact on the community in getting involved in cannabis.

Native American reservations have high rates of alcoholism, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention listing alcohol use as an important health issue that disproportionately affects some Native subgroups. The CDC also lists chronic liver disease and cirrhosis as the fifth leading cause of death.

A 2011 survey published in JAMA Psychiatry found that 15 percent of Native American adolescents aged 12 to 17 suffer from a drug abuse disorder, compared to 7.9 percent of the entire adolescent population.

"Native Americans and their families suffer disproportionately from addiction compared to other groups," Kevin Sabet, head of the anti-legalization project Smart Approaches to Marijuana, told the LA Times.

"The last thing they want is another commercialized industry that targets them for greater use."

- Some well known cannabis legalization groups are also chiming in on the debate:

Mason Tvert, a spokesman for the pro-legalization Marijuana Policy Project, said that tribal leaders "will have a tremendous opportunity to improve public health and safety, as well as benefit economically" by legalizing marijuana. "Regulating and taxing marijuana like alcohol would ensure the product is controlled, and it would bring significant revenue and new jobs to these communities," he told US News & World Report. "Studies have consistently found above-average rates of alcohol abuse and related problems among Native American communities, so it would be incredibly beneficial to provide adults with a safer recreational alternative," he added.

- According to the DOJ's spokesperson Wyn Hornbuckle "Some tribes are concerned with public safety implications such as youth impact, use of tribal lands for cultivation and transport of marijuana, while others have explored decriminalization or other approaches."
- The Seminole tribe of Florida, known for the HardRock Casino has already stated they are anti-cannabis. One of the owners spending \$5.5 million to contribute to the failure of Amendment 2 this year.
- At least (3) unidentified tribes have shown interest in legalization.
- The CHA has a concern that prohibitionist Native American tribes may remain so beyond federal legalization and/or state legalization furthering damage in those communities.
- The CHA is interested in helping raise awareness and improve opinion of cannabis in all of the 556 Native American tribal states over the long term.
- One of the primary issues of the Native American tribes is how will the federal governments and state governments assist them in law enforcement of dispensaries. Will the governments provide additional security or will the tribes be responsible for this on their own?
- Another issue is drug treatment more information comes out on the endocannabinoid systems role in treating addiction all the time. Could cannabis be a way to help restore some of these communities to normalcy?
- Could money raised from these programs be used for education, drug treatment, and land restoration?
- Could certain tribal nations shun marijuana but be interested in growing hemp or non-psychoactive cannabis for medical purpose?
- Could hemp become the versatile crop tribal nations need on their granted land to restore value to what normally be wasteland?
- Could a renaissance in the interest of Native American apparel and jewelry be on the horizon with a growing cannabis culture on the horizon?
- What could be the impact on states such as Texas with no MMJ program have now that they have no choice to allow Native America tribes to have a fully operational cannabis program?

- How could the CHA assist these tribes in organizing themselves?

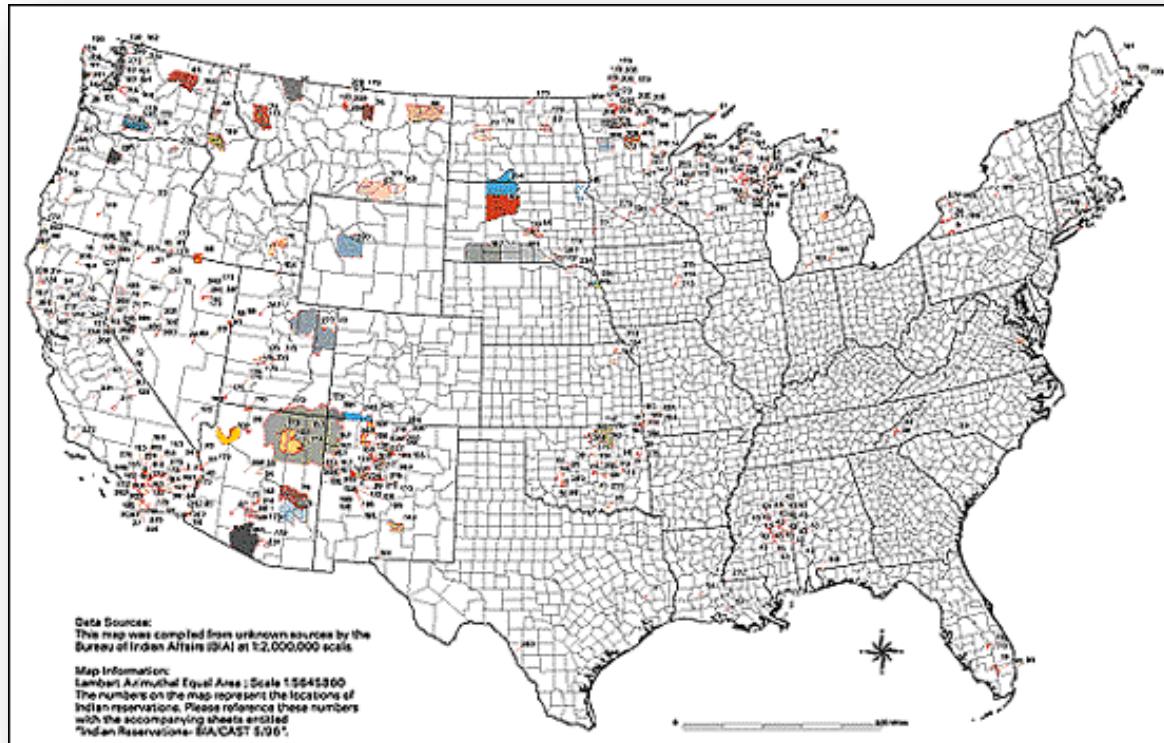


Figure 1. Native American tribal map
<http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/DOCUMENTS/ResMAP.HTM>

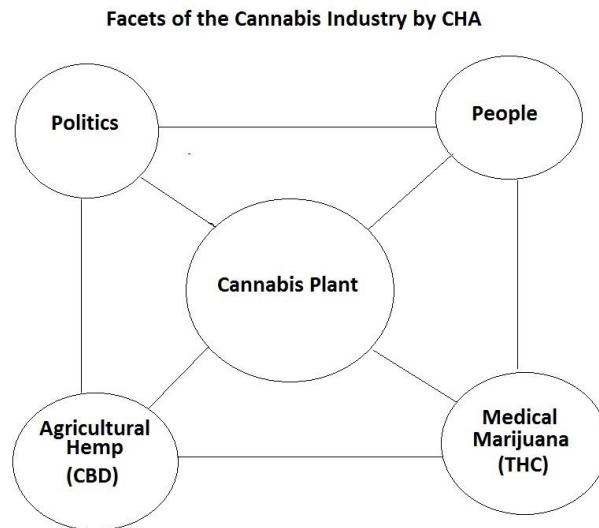


Figure 2. Facets of the Cannabis Industry In America

Notice "In America" Hemp and Marijuana are separated however in Native American tribes this need not be this way! *They are sovereign states!*