

TENNESSEE HEMP REGULATION TIMELINE

From a Working Regulatory Framework to Crisis — and the Path to Restoration

2018	Federal Farm Bill Signed	Congress passes the 2018 Farm Bill, creating a federal framework that distinguishes hemp from marijuana and opens the door for state-regulated hemp-derived cannabinoid markets.
2023	Public Chapter 423 (TDA Framework)	Tennessee passes Public Chapter 423, establishing a functional regulatory system under the Department of Agriculture. This framework allowed licensed businesses to sell legal THCA flower and other hemp-derived products with clear rules for licensing, testing, and compliance. The system was working.
Early 2025	HB 1376 Introduced	Legislation is introduced that would overhaul Tennessee's hemp regulations, shifting authority from the experienced TDA to the TABC and imposing strict new restrictions including post-decarboxylation Total THC testing.
2025	Public Chapter 526 Passed	HB 1376 becomes Public Chapter 526. This law dismantles the successful TDA regulatory framework that had been working reasonably well. It introduces a de facto ban on most THCA flower, heavy upstream taxes, and creates an entirely new licensing system under the TABC.
July 1, 2026	Implementation & Market Disruption	The new rules take effect. TABC experiences a massive licensing backlog (~2,000 applications, only ~50% approved). Average processing time reaches 29 days. Many businesses receive licenses too late to operate legally, leading to widespread closures, empty shelves, lost tax revenue, and veterans losing legal access to products they relied on.
Today	Save TN Hemp Campaign	Advocacy continues to restore the successful elements of the previous TDA regulatory framework. The Tennessee Responsible Hemp Commerce Act proposes practical improvements including individual Hemp Handlers Permits, specialty retail channels, and lab reciprocity — while maintaining strong consumer protections and generating revenue for infrastructure.

KEY MESSAGE: Tennessee had a working regulatory system under the Department of Agriculture (Public Chapter 423) that allowed legal THCA flower and supported local businesses. Public Chapter 526 dismantled that system. The Save TN Hemp Campaign is fighting to restore a functional framework with practical improvements that protect consumers, support small businesses, and generate revenue for infrastructure.

This timeline is provided for legislative and public policy consideration. Current as of July 2026.