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Congress Faces Budget Deadline as Debate Grows Over Hemp THC Regulation

WineAmerica event in Washington highlights industry concerns and seeks unity amid government funding uncertainty and regulatory challenges

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As the end of September approaches, the annual debate over a potential government shutdown is once again unfolding in Washington. Congress faces a deadline of midnight on September 30 to pass a Continuing Resolution, or CR, to keep federal agencies funded. Without this stopgap measure, the government would run out of money and many operations would come to a halt. The last time Congress passed a budget on time was during the Clinton administration, highlighting a long-standing pattern of missed deadlines under both Democratic and Republican leadership.

This year’s budget standoff is not the only issue drawing attention in the nation’s capital. A loophole in the 2018 Farm Bill has allowed for the legal sale and shipment of THC-infused hemp products without the strict regulations that govern alcohol and marijuana. Unlike marijuana, which is tightly controlled at both state and federal levels, hemp-derived products containing intoxicating levels of THC can be shipped directly to consumers without age verification or identification checks. This situation has raised concerns among lawmakers and industry groups.

Congress is now considering changes to reclassify these hemp products so that they are regulated in line with traditional marijuana products. WineAmerica, the national association representing American wineries, has voiced its support for this move. The organization has kept its members informed about developments through regular updates from Michael Kaiser, its vice president of government affairs.

Amid these policy debates, WineAmerica is preparing for its annual Come Over October wine reception in Washington. Scheduled for Wednesday, October 8, the event will take place in partnership with the Congressional Wine Caucus. The reception aims to bring together members of Congress, their staff, administration officials, and media representatives to celebrate American wine. Wines from across the country will be featured at the gathering.

The event is organized by WineAmerica’s Michael Kaiser along with Karen MacNeil, Kimberly Charles, and Gino Colangelo. The team hopes that sharing wine will foster a sense of unity among lawmakers during a period marked by political tension and uncertainty over government funding.

WineAmerica continues to advocate for policies that support American wineries and ensure fair regulation across all beverage industries. The group encourages those interested in staying informed about legislative developments affecting wine and related products to join its membership and receive regular updates.