

December 14, 2020

Dear Senator Wiener,

We are writing to express support for your legislation seeking to decriminalize psychedelics. We are so excited to be working on this process with you and Angela and are committed to the long haul helping get the bill through. We would like to share some of the thoughts we have for the bill that we have distilled in our meetings with MAPS, Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative, Sacred Garden Community Church, New Approach and various Decriminalize Nature leaders.

Within the context of narrow decriminalization of psychedelics and political realities this faces legislatively, the various respective areas of concern most urgent and relevant are: allowing the ability to grow, gather, prepare, and gift entheogenic plants; ensuring affirmative defense protections; allowing for analytical testing; allowing for local jurisdictions to pass legislation that would go further than the state bill towards decriminalization; and making sure that sustainability of wild plant medicine ecosystems and biocultural preservation of indigenous communities is addressed, most crucially with respect to peyote.

We also hope that you include language in the bill that will protect those who use entheogenic plants in religious, spiritual, and healing practices and ceremony: first and foremost indigenous groups who have engaged in such ceremonies and practices for hundreds or even thousands of years; but also sincere non-indigenous practitioners. One of the great mistakes of the state's cannabis legalization was that it failed to honor indigenous and indigenous communities and protect them. Thank you for your compassion bill, which sought to undo some of those mistakes. In order to keep the trust of these communities and not inadvertently make the practice of their healing practices and religion/spirituality more difficult or criminalized, as well as protect the rights of other sincere non-indigenous folks, we would suggest including language along lines below in your decriminalization bill. This would be in addition to the specific permission for anyone to grow, gather, and gift any substance or plant named in the bill.

Under this section, manufacture, possession, or delivery of entheogenic substances / sacraments is considered legal and exempt under this law if its intended use is:*

- (a) In connection with the good faith practice of a religious / spiritual belief;*
- (b) As directly associated with a religious / spiritual practice; and*
- (c) In a manner that is not dangerous to the health of the user or others who are in the proximity of the user.*

**For this legislation, psychoactive entheogens or "entheogenic substances / sacraments" are defined as living, fresh or dried or processed plant or fungal material or teas and powders that may contain currently scheduled and / or analog psychoactive indole amines and / or phenethylamines.*

We would also encourage you to convene a blue-ribbon panel of experts to dive deeper into the various ways that entheogenic plants and their psychedelic compounds can be best integrated into therapeutic (as distinct from medical pharma) and ceremonial practice for all adults who can safely benefit (eg. see Oregon's Psilocybin Therapy model that recently passed; as well as indigenous and religious ceremonial practices). This panel should also report on how psychedelic therapy and ceremonies can treat specific mental health conditions, including but not limited to PTSD, depression, end-of-life anxiety and substance use disorders; and specifically consult with the Heroic Hearts Project and Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions (VETS). Also within the panel's purview should be protecting the culture and ecosystems for indigenous medicine communities, through collaboration with groups such as Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative, Native American Churches, Riverstyx foundation, ICEERS, ONCA Foundation, Chacrana Institute, Sacred Garden Community and others. As well, the panel should investigate and report on how community-based healing serves communities of color, in consultation with for example Spearitwurx and How We Heal (Dr. Mellody Hayes group).

Note that while we all have incredible appreciation for the psychedelic researcher community and their groundbreaking amazing healing work, some in that community, mostly out of misplaced fear of cultural backlash compromising FDA approval of psilocybin assisted therapy, oppose healing outside of narrow medical pharma clinical contexts, at least until FDA approval. We would not like to see researchers who have this bias participate in this panel; there are plenty like Dr. Mellody Hayes who appreciate and practice within the medical pharma frame with psilocybin assisted therapy, who also see the limitations of that model and the virtue of therapeutic and ceremonial healing contexts that are more economically and often culturally accessible for many communities, especially BIPOC and indigent.

Finally, regarding the use and inclusion of Peyote specifically, we advise that we wait and learn what recommendations and guidelines come from the NAC and IPCI. Our understanding is that a formal position will ensue shortly after they gather in counsel on January 13th. We are waiting on some key questions such as home cultivation for non-indigenous personal use. For sure non-indigenous should avoid any use of wild peyote, which should be restricted for indigenous use only, and can avail themselves of San Pedro instead, a mescaline containing cacti that is not in a state of collapse in the wild in the same way as peyote. Also commercial cultivation of peyote, when that time comes, should be within the purview and to the benefit of indigenous communities, who grow and provide the medicine in the right prayerful vibration.

We are eager to remain an ally and resource on this legislation and look forward to working together. We have retained the Milo group which has good relations with various stakeholders, and we will sponsor travel costs for allies in the veteran and other traumatized communities who have experienced these life-saving medicines, to lobby and testify as needed.

With Gratitude and Best Regards,

David Bronner, Dr. Bronner's
In close partnership with

Sacred Garden Community Church
and New Approach