

January 17, 2023

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
1021 O St., Suite 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 58 (Wiener), Decriminalization of Certain Hallucinogenic Substances

Dear Senator Wiener,

On behalf of the City of Eureka and the Eureka City Council, I write in support of SB 58 by Senator Scott Wiener. This measure would decriminalize the possession and personal use of the following substances: psilocybin, psilocyn, dimethyltryptamine (“DMT”), mescaline (from non-peyote sources), and ibogaine for people 21 years and older, given that these substances can have therapeutic and medicinal benefits. This is an incremental step towards dismantling failed War on Drugs policies.

The City of Eureka is the county seat of Humboldt County, California, and is the heart of the Redwood Coast. Eureka is the market and cultural center of a beautiful region surrounded by the world’s tallest trees and rugged ocean landscapes. The City is known for its Victorian architecture and creative and welcoming culture.

The stigma behind psychedelic drugs overshadows their legitimate value as medicine. In the 1960s, psychedelics were legal and many researchers were conducting promising studies on the effectiveness of substances as a medicine. However, the War on Drugs halted this scientific progress and among many things, created a system of criminalization to deter drug use that is not founded in science. Today, we have research that clearly demonstrates psychedelics’ value as a tool for healing, and many experts consider them the most promising advancement in mental health treatment in decades

For California’s veterans, psychedelics have especially promising healing potential. Too many veterans live with the debilitating effects of PTSD, and studies indicates that for veterans, many of whom live with PTSD, access to psychedelics can be effective in treating this acute trauma. Such treatment has the potential to save lives; veterans die by suicide at a rate of one and a half times the general public. Many veterans who have used psychedelic medicines to treat their PTSD report that without this treatment, they would have taken their life.

In recent years, we have seen many states and localities acknowledge the healing potential of psychedelics. In addition to cities across the country, the California cities of Oakland, San Francisco, Arcata, and Santa Cruz passed resolutions decriminalizing plant-based psychedelics. Washington D.C. did the same. In 2020, Oregon voters approved two ballot measures that decriminalize the personal



use of all scheduled substances, and authorized the creation of a state-licensed, psilocybin-assisted therapy program over the next two years. In 2022, Colorado voters approved a ballot measure to decriminalize the noncommercial, personal possession of psychedelic plants and fungi.

It is time that California stop criminalizing possession and use of substances that have immense medicinal potential. It is time for California to thoughtfully regulate legal use of these substances. SB 58 is an incremental measure that relies on a more modern understanding of psychedelics, and provides space for California to start a more sensible conversation about how we really ought to treat people who are using psychedelic substances for personal and medical purposes.

The City of Eureka lends its voice to the broad coalition supporting SB 58 by Senator Wiener. Thank you for considering our support for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kim Bergel
Mayor
City of Eureka