

Nicholas Combest (Decriminalize Nature Portland) City Council address 10/30/19

Good morning everyone. My name is Nicholas Combest. I am here today representing Decriminalize Nature Portland and our 9,000+ supporters.

I was an IV addict for ten years and was in and out of jails, rehabs, and mental institutions. This medicine path has been instrumental to my healing, and inspires me to help others heal themselves.

Right now in Oregon, we are facing a mental health crisis. We have the 4th highest addiction rate nationwide. The for-profit medical system has failed us. Low income and marginalized communities are disproportionately denied access to care and now in Multnomah County we are facing budget cuts to our "alternatives to incarceration" programs.

The symptoms of this capitalistic paradigm and the global effects of imperialism cannot be ignored. In our opinion, and in the opinion of many traditional healers, we have become disconnected from our roots. We have severed our connection to spirit.

It doesn't have to be this way; nature has provided solutions to our psycho-spiritual ills. Certain plants and fungi serve as tools to explore consciousness and develop a deeper wisdom. In fact, several psilocybin mushrooms are native to the Portland area. When used in safe spaces with proper intent, the experiences are therapeutic.

We have 20 years of research into the therapeutic effects of psilocybin treating conditions such as addiction, depression, PTSD, cluster headaches, and more. Trials have been run at top universities such as Johns Hopkins, NYU, Imperial College of London, and Yale.

Another plant medicine, Iboga, has shown unparalleled success in treating opioid addiction.

For the last year our team has been canvassing the streets of our city, talking about the decriminalization of mushrooms and plant medicines. We have raised \$110,000 from over 9,000 individuals and held 6 donation based educational events. Portland Psychedelic Society is one of the largest in the world. We have the means of donation based education and integration at no cost to the city and we have broad public support.

In the last year we have seen Denver decriminalize mushrooms, and we have seen Decriminalize Nature Oakland pass a resolution through city council with a unanimous vote. Most recently, the City of Chicago passed the same resolution with a 50-0 vote.

Here in Portland, we have spoke with city and county commissioner offices. We have also filed a Charter amendment intended for the Portland November 2020 ballot.

We are seeking your endorsements, and are looking forward to furthering the conversation with you all.

City of Portland Charter Amendment Decriminalization of Natural Psychedelics

Whereas, the people of City of Portland find that:

1. The possession and personal use of psychedelic plant medicines, defined herein as the Schedule I(d) plant and fungi containing therapeutic and natural psychedelic compounds, have been unjustly and immorally criminalized since the Nixon Administration.
2. Natural medicines and the plants of the Earth should be a common treasury for all humankind and should remain accessible to all regardless of race, orientation, gender, and class.
3. The principles of "cognitive liberty" and "bodily autonomy" endow all human beings with the inalienable right to freedom of thought within their own minds, as well as the freedom to ingest whatever they wish as long as it does not harm others.
4. Making these medicines available only through government-licensed facilities or health care centers in a country in which healthcare is a for-profit industry will create barriers to access for the most vulnerable and in-need populations.
5. Substance abuse, addiction, recidivism, trauma, post-traumatic stress symptoms, chronic depression, severe anxiety, end-of-life anxiety, grief, diabetes, cluster headaches, and other conditions are plaguing our community, and the use of psychedelic plants has been shown to be beneficial to the health and well-being of individuals and communities in addressing these afflictions via scientific and clinical studies and within continuing traditional practices, which can catalyze profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth.
6. The governor of Oregon has declared addiction to be a public health crisis in this state.
7. Practices with psychedelic plants have long existed and have been considered to be sacred to human cultures and human interrelationships with nature for thousands of years and continue to be enhanced and improved to this day by religious and spiritual leaders, practicing professionals, mentors, and healers throughout the world, many of whom

have been forced underground and have been put in fear of arrest and prosecution.

8. The psychedelic plant practices of certain groups are already explicitly protected in the United States under the doctrine of religious freedom.
9. The psychedelic plant practices around mescaline containing cacti and Ayahuasca are already protected in Oregon under the doctrine of religious freedom.
10. The United Nations considers psychedelic plant material used for ritual purposes as excluded from government prohibitions.
11. Psychedelic plants containing ibogaine have been shown to alleviate treatment-resistant cases of opiate and methamphetamine addiction at significantly higher rates than all other treatments for addiction.
12. Ibogaine is reported to be beneficial for addiction therapy related to specific work-related PTSD encountered by first responders such as EMT, police, and firefighters, as well as military veterans.
13. Psychedelic plants or combinations of plants such as Ayahuasca that contain forms of DMT, a naturally occurring compound in the human body that is listed as a Schedule 1 substance, can lead to experiences that are reported as mystical or experientially similar to near death experiences that can be demonstrably beneficial in treating addiction, depression and PTSD and in catalyzing profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth.
14. Psychedelic cacti that contain phenethylamine compounds such as mescaline, can be beneficial in healing drug and alcohol addiction and for individual spiritual growth and have been utilized in sacred initiation and community healing by diverse religious and cultural traditions for millennia and continue in use as religious sacraments in modern times.
15. Psilocybin, naturally occurring in certain mushroom species, can alleviate end-of-life anxiety for hospice and terminal cancer patients, can reduce prison recidivism, and can effectively treat substance abuse, depression, cluster headaches.
16. A Johns Hopkins University study on "healthy-normals" found that psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences, which were considered

one of the top five most meaningful experiences in a subject's life for over 75% of their subjects within the first year after the study, and found continuing positive life-style changes after a 14-month follow-up.

17. The City of Portland wishes to declare its desire not to expend City resources in any investigation, detention, arrest, or prosecution arising out of alleged violations of state and federal law regarding the use of psychedelic plants.

Therefore, a new Article 1 to a new Chapter 16 of the City of Portland Charter shall be added and shall read as follows:

Article 1
Decriminalization of Psilocybin Mushrooms

15-101. Definitions.

- a. "Psychedelic plant medicines" means the naturally occurring plant and fungal matters listed below containing any of the substances listed under 21 C.F.R. § 1308.11 Schedule I(c):
- (1) "Psilocybin mushrooms" means fungal matter containing psilocybin or psilocyn.
 - (2) "Iboga", means plant matter of the Apocynaceae family containing ibogaine.
 - (3) "Bufotenine" means plant matter containing the 5-HO-DMT alkaloid.
 - (4) "DMT-containing plants" means plant matter containing nn-dimethyltryptamine, 5-methoxy-dimethyltryptamine, 5-hydroxy-dimethyltryptamine or any dimethyltryptamine related isomers or structural analogues.
 - (5) "Mescaline Cacti" means plant matter of the family Cactaceae containing mescaline.
- b. "Personal possession" means the possession, storage or propagation of psychedelic plant medicines by an adult for personal

use, where the psychedelic plant medicines are not used or displayed in public.

15-102. No Law Shall Regulate Personal Use or Possession of Psychedelic Plant Medicines.

- (a) The City of Portland shall adopt no law prohibiting or regulating the personal use or possession of psychedelic plant medicines or the production or distribution of psychedelic plant medicines for personal use.
- (b) The City of Portland may adopt laws regulating the commercial sale of psychedelic plant medicines, when the quantity being sold by the offending person is worth more than \$500 per week.

15-103. Enforcement of Federal or State Laws on Production, Distribution, Possession, or Use of Psychedelic Plant Medicines.

- (a) The City of Portland shall not enforce federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, rules, or regulations imposing criminal penalties for:
 - (1) the personal use or possession of psychedelic plant medicines; or
 - (2) the growing, production, or distribution of psychedelic plant medicines for personal use or possession.
- (b) The City of Portland may enforce laws regulating the commercial sale of psychedelic plant medicines, when the quantity being sold by the offending person is worth more than \$500 per week.
- (c) Except as specifically authorized in subsection (b), no department, agency, board, commission, other entity, officer, employee, or contractor of the City shall use any City funds or resources to assist in the enforcement of laws, ordinances, rules or regulations imposing criminal penalties for the personal use or possession of psychedelic plant medicines by adults.

15-104. Severability.

For the purpose of determining constitutionality, every section, subsection, and subdivision thereof of this Section, at any level of subdivision, shall be evaluated separately. If any section, subsection or subdivision at any level is held invalid, the remaining sections, subsections and subdivisions shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect. The courts shall sever those sections, subsections, and subdivisions necessary to render this Section consistent with the United States Constitution and with the Oregon Constitution.

Gaby Peterson
Mother
Portland resident

On September 29th of last year [2018] it was my son's 16th birthday. I have been away from my children for two years and a half, and everyday was harder and harder and harder. I had overcome mild depression before with the help of psilocybin so this time when depression had made me hit rock bottom I knew that it was time to do it again. So I went with a trusted human to the beach and asked nature to bring me back to life.

Part of my depression was having a lot of self-deprecation episodes on a daily basis. That day while I was on my "journey" I found myself repeating these self-deprecating words over and over again. The way I was saying these things, the voice that I was using while I was saying these words was a different voice, it was not mine, and in the moment that I realized that was the moment that I was able to remind myself who I am, what my voice sounds like and what do I believe and say about myself.

After realizing that this was not my voice, that these were not my words and that these were not my beliefs, I was able to walk out from that beach that night and go back home remembering who I am, who I want to be, and that the voices that I should be listening to should be the ones from my children. And what would they say if they would hear me saying these things about myself? They would call me a liar. And what would they feel if their mother would have committed suicide? Do I really want my children to go through that pain just because I was convinced I was somebody I was not? **Mushrooms saved my life that day.** Thanks to them, my children are not orphaned. After that I have not needed the help of any chemical substance to keep me on track and balanced. I have not had any other dose of mushrooms since that day because I have not needed to get off depression.

Please share this with every human that is lost in depression, that fight can be fought and won with psilocybin. I know it because I'm still here and just a few days from now it will be my son's birthday again and I can hear his voice saying I love you.

Olivia Marshall
Portland resident

I'm writing in as a 27-year-old Caucasian female civil/environmental engineer, a registered Engineer-In-Training, and will be getting my Professional Engineer certificate Spring 2020. My partner is a 27-year-old Caucasian male environmental scientist. We both work for an environmental consulting firm in Portland and have both suffered from headaches. His are in the form of cluster headaches while mine stem from a neck injury. My partner's life was seriously affected by his cluster headaches. They are actually much worse than they sound. They come and go in cycles, often in the summer, especially when he is doing field work. At the end of the day, he'll get a shadow of a headache and chug water and cayenne pepper drops. He's been seeing a doctor and taking a medication for years to assist with keeping these intense headaches at bay. Often times this would do nothing to stop them from coming on and for 15-45 minutes he'd lie down in a dark room feeling like he was being stabbed in his eye repeatedly. If he so much as had a sip of beer on a hot day, he knew he would be getting a cluster headache later.

I myself suffer from tension headaches due to ligament damage in my cervical spine. My cervical muscles overcompensate to hold my spine in place because my ligament is damaged. The muscles will then constantly pull on each other, up and all across my skull.

I work in environmental remediation and have always been fascinated by mycelium's effective ability to remediate a host of different types of contamination. Mycelium is absolutely key to the overall health of an ecosystem. I am an urban beekeeper in Portland and have actively worked to save local and honey bee populations. I have followed Paul Stamet's work within the fungi community and his research on mycelium solutions that greatly increase the immune system of honeybees and am very excited to do the same for my bees when his product is released next summer. I use many different medicinal mushrooms regularly for their health benefits (reishi, chaga, cordyceps, shiitake, lion's mane, etc). Essentially - I am a huge believer that mushrooms are absolutely essential to human and environmental health and wellbeing.

Knowing this, and seeing my partner suffer, I asked him if he'd be willing to "micro-dose" with psilocybin mushrooms. He was hesitant, knowing they were not legal and wanting to find a more "conventional" route to mitigate his cluster headaches. We both did some research and people's testimonials on microdosing for cluster headaches was enough to get him to at least try it. Since then (2017), he's never looked back. Microdosing once was enough to completely keep his cluster headaches at bay for about a week. Taking a larger dose prevented his headaches from returning for over two weeks. We were both amazed. He kept this up and I am absolutely thrilled to say he hasn't even had a shadow of incoming cluster headache in weeks.

While my headaches are more of a physical issue, I too have found relief with psychedelic mushrooms. On a few occasions when my muscles won't stop tightening all over and my headache doesn't seem like it will end, I've microdosed with a little bit of psilocybin mushroom

(basically enough to make you feel slightly bubbly but without the full psychedelic effect, like the "drug" equivalent of a cup of coffee) and that has seriously helped my muscles to relax and my headache to dissipate.

To add, several of my friends and I enjoy taking slightly larger doses of psilocybin every 6-12 months together and talking about the world. We all come away from the experience intensely more connected to the planet and each other, and see the interconnections of thoughts, ideas, and our spirit with the earth. The actual sensation may lift us from the earth to see the bigger picture, but it brings us back down to earth and helps us get out of our heads and focus less on the self and more on the important things in life. Everyone I know who has taken psilocybin mushrooms has never taken them with the intended purpose to "trip out" - we all know that everything we ingest should be taken in moderation (even too much water in a small amount of time can kill you).

Essentially, I have nothing but positive words to say about psychedelic plants. I feel as though everyone should experience them. I could go on, but the bottom line is that making this form of mushrooms illegal is just illogical. Entheogenic plants are not "evil drugs", they are the opposite.

Jordan S. Weiss

Caucasian. 54 years old. I have lived in Portland, Oregon for eighteen years. I have always been fascinated by mushrooms and am still collecting wild-edible species that I enjoy cooking into delicious meals

My first experience with psilocybin mushrooms was in 1982 in southern California - I procured a few grams of cultivated *Psilocybin cubensis* at a party and had a wonderful, first-time experience.

The next two times were at Grateful Dead concerts and the third time was with a new species (For me): *Psilocybin cyanescens*. I had four grams-all at once. It was a heavy experience for an introverted nineteen year-old with poor-interpersonal relationships and communication skills.

Twenty-six years later, I tried anti-depressants for depression for a few years (I was in a psych ward no less than 5x in six years) with limited success: I felt like I was flat-lining through out the day on the cocktail of three different ones the doctor prescribed me.

By 2007, I returned to using psilocybin mushrooms in large and tiny-amounts i.e. micro-doses, years before Ayelet Waldman's ground-breaking book on micro-dosing hit the bookstores.

As long as I am alive, I will always have interpersonal work to do. My connection with nature and with most people is mostly a source of joy. I have a sense of well-being in the world, given everything that is currently happening, that I did not have prior to 2007.

I believe widespread access to our plant and mushroom allies - for all people, with no financial restrictions for the most vulnerable people in our civilization. Using a simple and clearly written harm-reduction model is the first act in making cognitive liberty available for all who choose. I also believe things will get much, much worse in the U.S.A. the longer this evolution of our species is delayed.

Sky Vavonese

Portland resident of 2 years

All plants and mushrooms should be decriminalized. No plant or mushrooms should ever have been criminalized in the first place. “Many currently illegal drugs, such as marijuana, opium, coca, and psychedelics have been used for thousands of years for both medical and spiritual purposes. So why are some drugs legal and other drugs illegal today? It's not based on any scientific assessment of the relative risks of these drugs – but it has everything to do with who is associated with these drugs. The first anti-opium laws in the 1870s were directed at Chinese immigrants. The first anti-cocaine laws in the early 1900s were directed at black men in the South. The first anti-marijuana laws, in the Midwest and the Southwest in the 1910s and 20s, were directed at Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans. Today, Latino and especially black communities are still subject to wildly disproportionate drug enforcement and sentencing practices.” *A Brief History of the Drug War - The Early Stages of Drug Prohibition*, Drug Policy Alliance, <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war>. When we look at the reasons for the drug war, ie. to target and marginalize black and brown people through incarceration and police violence which ripple through generations, to criminalize community organizers trying to make a better world, to vilify the homeless populations, and break down the anti-war effort, we should all be working to dismantle the drug war by any means necessary. The drug war is not a war against drugs but a war against the people and the Earth.

Psychedelic plants and mushrooms are healing people from trauma and addiction, connecting people to nature and our lineages through practice and tradition, and bringing us to understanding and peace. We deserve to decide what our relationship to the natural world is, that is our cognitive liberty. I have dealt with deep subconscious grief and been on a path of healing by eating mushrooms and sitting in my backyard. This is not a means of “getting high.” I cannot possibly imagine eating mushrooms at a party and having a good time. I eat mushrooms to break down and cry (which I often cannot do), to understand my traumas, to understand the life cycles and my own mortality, to let myself be angry about injustice and to impassion my ability to organize.

I consider the mushrooms to be sentient, as all plant and elemental life is. Being that fungus is older than humanity, I also consider the mushrooms and mycelium to have wisdom to share with us. Might sound like “hippy hoo-woo” to some, but when we sit down with nature to commune in the ways we know how to, we are greatly humbled by how little we invite nature to the table. For the many people affected by the drug war, these medicines may be a tunnel to the light, a vessel of hope. This is why all plants and mushrooms should be decriminalized.

Lydia Lutsyshyna
Portland resident

In my sophomore year of college at Reed, I began to experience symptoms of severe depression. After a suicide attempt and a stay at a mental hospital, I began to experiment heavily with psychedelics. It is my strong belief that without these medicines, I would not have blossomed out of the pit of sadness. Mushrooms gave me a fresh perspective on life, pushing me to deal with issues and insecurities I had brushed to the back of my mind. Through combination of psychedelics, traditional antidepressants, and talk therapy, I have gained considerable self-knowledge and coping skills. The fact that psilocybin remains on schedule I next to heroin infuriates me, because I know that mushrooms saved my life.

Barb Greene

Retired from 14 years of working as Family Sexual Abuse Treatment team at a local community mental health center for kids
Portland resident since 1991

I have been dealing with anxiety, depression, addictions, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and autoimmune conditions my entire life, due to childhood trauma. This has made my life a real struggle and made it impossible to be as productive as I would like to be, culminating in having to retire early and take Social Security earlier than I wanted. This has been expensive for me and also for society. I feel bad about this.

Western medicine has not been helpful. My Medicare PCP told me, and I quote, "I can not help you." I have used recreational cannabis medicinally for severe insomnia since it was legalized, but it doesn't help with the fatigue and anxiety which are the biggest problems. Microdosing with psychoactive substances has been shown to be very helpful for anxiety and fatigue, but I can't access them because they are not decriminalized. Please help!

I had been working as the administrative assistant to the Family Sexual Abuse Treatment team at a local community mental health center for kids for 14 years. I tried cutting back hours, but finally had to quit altogether. I have been a Portland resident since 1991.

I should mention that back in the day ('60s) I had major depression and was suicidal and mescaline got me through it. Even though I only took it a few times, it made me really happy and joyful (as opposed to cannabis which tended to make me paranoid) so I was able to see that there was a different way to feel. It gave me hope in a way that conventional medicine (psychiatric drugs and electric shock treatments) did not. I'm very ambivalent about sharing this as it's unclear what the statute of limitations is.

Adam Bird
QMHP Mental Health Specialist with Marion County.

Here is my testimony below.

As a qualified mental health professional in Marion County Oregon and a graduate of the Applied Psychological Sciences program at Pacific University, I support the decriminalization and controlled medical use of psilocybin for mental health treatment. Recent research into the use of psilocybin for anxiety, depression, and end of life treatment has shown dramatic improvements in the participant's outcomes and outlook on life. Current trials with MDMA, a close cousin of psilocybin, also show promise for military veterans in treating combat PTSD as well as a reduced need for multiple talk therapy sessions. Smoking and alcohol addiction treatment have also made significant strides when combined with psilocybin and up to nearly 85 percent success rate in addiction treatment. The personal impact of psilocybin treatment can be seen as life changing given testimonies from participants who describe their experiences with psilocybin to be one of the top 5 most life changing experiences. This is seen to be even more significant with increases in life meaning and decreases in their fear of death. In addition to a high immediate success rate there is also evidence of sustained positive changes with continued decrease in anxiety and depression 6 months following treatment with psilocybin in 80 percent of participants.

No treatment is without its side effects. It is true that physiologically speaking, psilocybin is considered very safe with a very low chance of overdose risk. Caution is advised however as there is still uncertainty with how psilocybin and other entheogens can affect populations who struggle with psychosis and no studies have yet been conducted to my knowledge on the potential effects of psilocybin use on youth. Another caution is that psilocybin's effectiveness is dependent on set and setting, meaning the patient or research participant must be in a calm state of mind and in a safe setting with a trusted guide. With a carefully formulated screening process for intake and procedures before, during, and after psilocybin treatment as well as trained mental health professionals and medical staff, the therapeutic use of psilocybin could not only create a new industry within the mental health field, but also revolutionize the paradigm of mental healthcare treatment of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addiction.

Tara Kirin Kaur
10.24.2019

I am a human writing this for the rights of all humans. I am an avid student and prophet of life, love, the light that resides and illuminates within each and every human being no matter what "race", "creed", "cast", "gender", "sexual orientation", the list of labels and false identities go on and on. We are all one, we are all love! The Life Force energy, breath, is shared amongst all living beings, connecting us, it is us and we are it! This includes plants, trees, the ocean, birds etc... There is no separation! These labels of good, bad, different, normal, strange, etc... are all made up by Man, the ego. Animals/Trees eat from the Earth, heal from the Earth, live harmoniously with the Earth. If there is no separation, why is it that human beings do not have this same freedom as our tribal ancestors who inhabited this land long before "Americans" or the "War on Drugs?"

I have two now adult children. Both of these beautiful gifts of life, did not "do well" in the public school system, suffered a challenging divorce at 3 and 5, and was raised by a then depressed, anxious ridden, traumatized, extremely fatigued, stressed, functioning alcoholic Mother, **me!** With a Father who was in and out taking them on the biggest roller coaster ride of their lives. I like most "hard working, responsible" Americans held it all together. By societal standards (labels) I was successful in my career making the American dream of six figures a year, had a home, dog, health insurance, retirement plan, lived in a manicured suburb of Los Angeles...all the ingredients for a happy life, right? WRONG! We were all miserable trying to hold up the facade and live by the rules outlined to us by the American dream.

On our first visit to a Mental Health Doctor, covered by my insurance, to discuss my concern for my Son's fatigue, lack of appetite, inability to "pass" his milestones in school like everyone else we were issued a prescription for ADD. Yes, I said first visit! The Doctor barely made eye contact, asked a few standard questions. Before I knew it, he had his pen in hand writing a prescription! I was appalled! I had heard about this through others but, this was my first experience. The side effects of this "medicine" far superseded the benefits...What were the benefits??? He was worse off than he started! Numb! Lifeless! He suffered a painstaking battle with Xanax ("legal" prescription) and alcohol (drink it up legally, easily at every corner for every occasion) which led him to rehab. Rehab doctors and therapists only re-enforced he was an addict. "Hi my name is, blank, I am an addict." REALLY! Has anyone in these facilities heard of the power of the word?!?! Affirmations? Seriously, and to prescribe drugs to help the "addict" come off of the other drug, WHAT! After much research and seeking the help of a Holistic practitioner, not covered by insurance, we began our journey with plant based medicines such as Cannabis and Psilocybin, along with other psychedelic healing modalities.

Shift gears to a visit I had with a LCSW therapist, covered by insurance. Upon my informing her of my use of medical Cannabis and psychedelics for anxiety, depression, body fatigue and insomnia, she did not advise me to use Cannabis or "illegal substances." Instead, she recommend I see a Psychiatrist and they may start me on a low dose of prescription drugs that have been "*clinically tested*" to improve these symptoms. She even said I may have a personality disorder that could be treated with these medicines...What! What is a disorder of personality! She was clearly uneducated on the medicinal properties of Cannabis, Psychedelic therapy and HUMANOLOGY! That was my last visit.

To summarize, myself and my children, tried to follow the heard and heal as we were told to heal. We have lived a plant based healing life for almost a decade now. I no longer drink alcohol, my son is clean from a painstaking Xanax/alcohol journey to self medicate his fear, anxiety and depression **legally!** My daughter has expanded her self expression through art instead of self-sabotage, anger, fear and resentment stemming from childhood Father

abandonment issues. There are countless stories, this is just one family. I know there are many with far grimmer life experiences. The research is already available of the countless benefits of Psychedelic therapy. I ask that these natural, sustainable healing modalities be available for humans to heal by the hand and heart of Mother Earth. The way nature intended.

Thank you for taking the time to invest in reading our personal story. Plant based healing should be accessible and valued as treatment for all humans who suffer in our world.

“We are fighting for a righteous cause - our right to live with honor and in peace - and not for the sake of self glory or rule over others.” - Guru Hargobind

In the name of love and peace.

Humbly,

Tara Kirin Kaur

Adam Bird
QMHP Mental Health Specialist with Marion County.

Here is my testimony below.

As a qualified mental health professional in Marion County Oregon and a graduate of the Applied Psychological Sciences program at Pacific University, I support the decriminalization and controlled medical use of psilocybin for mental health treatment. Recent research into the use of psilocybin for anxiety, depression, and end of life treatment has shown dramatic improvements in the participant's outcomes and outlook on life. Current trials with MDMA, a close cousin of psilocybin, also show promise for military veterans in treating combat PTSD as well as a reduced need for multiple talk therapy sessions. Smoking and alcohol addiction treatment have also made significant strides when combined with psilocybin and up to nearly 85 percent success rate in addiction treatment. The personal impact of psilocybin treatment can be seen as life changing given testimonies from participants who describe their experiences with psilocybin to be one of the top 5 most life changing experiences. This is seen to be even more significant with increases in life meaning and decreases in their fear of death. In addition to a high immediate success rate there is also evidence of sustained positive changes with continued decrease in anxiety and depression 6 months following treatment with psilocybin in 80 percent of participants.

No treatment is without its side effects. It is true that physiologically speaking, psilocybin is considered very safe with a very low chance of overdose risk. Caution is advised however as there is still uncertainty with how psilocybin and other entheogens can affect populations who struggle with psychosis and no studies have yet been conducted to my knowledge on the potential effects of psilocybin use on youth. Another caution is that psilocybin's effectiveness is dependent on set and setting, meaning the patient or research participant must be in a calm state of mind and in a safe setting with a trusted guide. With a carefully formulated screening process for intake and procedures before, during, and after psilocybin treatment as well as trained mental health professionals and medical staff, the therapeutic use of psilocybin could not only create a new industry within the mental health field, but also revolutionize the paradigm of mental healthcare treatment of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addiction.

From: [Decriminalize NaturePDX](#)
To: [Moore-Love, Karla](#)
Subject: Re: [User Approved] Request for time on city council Agenda for August 14th, 2019
Date: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 12:26:08 PM

Hello Karla,

Yes I want to speak on October 30. My name is Nicholas Combest. My address is 7149 N Macrum Avenue, Portland, OR 97203. Phone number is (541) 631-9819. I will be speaking on the national movement called Decriminalize Nature and the reasons why our city of Portland should join the movement to decriminalize the plants and fungus currently classified as schedule 1.

On Tue, Aug 13, 2019 at 9:04 AM Moore-Love, Karla <Karla.Moore-Love@portlandoregon.gov> wrote:

Also, if others wish to speak for three minutes on October 30th, they have to submit their own request.

Karla

From: Moore-Love, Karla
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 8:12 AM
To: Decriminalize NaturePDX <decriminalizenaturepdx@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: [User Approved] Request for time on city council Agenda for August 14th, 2019

Sorry, the October 23rd spot was taken. Will October 30th work for you?

If so, please send me your name, address, phone number, date you wish to speak, and topic.

Thank you,

Karla



Karla Moore-Love

Council Clerk | City Hall Rm 130

503.823.4086

From: Decriminalize NaturePDX <decriminalizenaturepdx@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 12, 2019 6:21 PM
To: Moore-Love, Karla <Karla.Moore-Love@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: Re: [User Approved] Request for time on city council Agenda for August 14th, 2019

Thank you all very much for your time and consideration. We would love to be scheduled for October 23rd.

-Nicholas Combest,

Decriminalize Nature Portland

On Fri, Aug 9, 2019, 3:01 PM Moore-Love, Karla <Karla.Moore-Love@portlandoregon.gov> wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for your request to address the Portland City Council. Unfortunately, City Council is not meeting on August 14th and our next available Communications spots are not until October 23rd (one spot available) or October 30th (currently, all five spots are available). Note – Mayor Wheeler will be absent on both days.

If you are interested in speaking in October, please send me your name, address, phone number, date you wish to speak, and topic.

Communications are the first item on the official agenda and we start at 9:30 a.m. You will have three minutes to speak but you may also submit written material, please provide seven copies.

Communications allow the Council to hear issues that interest our community members but does not always allow an opportunity for dialogue.

Council takes place at City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave., 2nd floor, Council Chambers.

Sincerely,

Karla



Karla Moore-Love

Council Clerk | City of Portland

1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 130, Portland, OR 97204

(503) 823-4086

www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/councilclerk



From: Jennings, Gayla <Gayla.Jennings@portlandoregon.gov>

Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 2:09 PM

To: Council Clerk – Testimony <CCTestimony@portlandoregon.gov>

Subject: FW: [User Approved] Request for time on city council Agenda for August 14th, 2019

Good afternoon,

The Auditor received this email in her public inbox. It was originally marked as “junk” by the email system so I’m forwarding it to you just in case you didn’t receive it.

Thanks!

Gayla Jennings

Deputy Auditor | Office of the City Auditor

City of Portland, Oregon

Phone (503) 823-3560

From: Decriminalize NaturePDX <decriminalizenaturepdx@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 12:03 PM

To: Council Clerk – Testimony <CCTestimony@portlandoregon.gov>; Wheeler, Mayor <MayorWheeler@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Eudaly <chloe@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Fish <nick@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Fritz <amanda@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Hardesty <joann@portlandoregon.gov>; City Auditor, Mary Hull Caballero <AuditorHullCaballero@portlandoregon.gov>

Subject: [User Approved] Request for time on city council Agenda for August 14th, 2019

Dear Elected Officials of Portland,

We are reaching out today as citizens and members of the Decriminalize Nature Portland movement to request time in front of the city council on Wednesday, August 14th 2019. This is our written testimony for the Agenda.

For 11 months, we have been standing on the streets of Portland talking to folks about the physical, mental, and spiritual health benefits of Psilocybin mushrooms and other plant entheogens, based on thousands of years of traditional use as well as decades of clinical research. In this time we have gathered over 6,000 supporters who want to see this succeed. These supporters include people from all classes and communities including many parents, professionals, elders, students, and people who self identify as drug addicted and mentally ill.

We believe this fits into justice reform, mental health care, and cognitive liberty in many regards. For a short and simple elaboration on the Schedule 1 substances we are working to decriminalize;

A. We believe that no one should be penalized for seeking self healing or for pursuing cognitive liberty. Despite no medical evidence, Nixon's administration claimed that entheogens such as Psilocybin mushrooms have no medical value and have high risk for abuse. Our understanding of the motivations behind the Drug War were affirmed by the words of John Ehrlichman; the Drug War is used as a ploy against Black and Brown people as well as people in the anti-war movement in the 60's. Especially community organizers and low income people. This was not an original ploy, criminalization of substances in the category of "drugs" has been used as a target against people for decades. "The first anti-opium laws in the 1870s were directed at Chinese immigrants. The first

anti-cocaine laws in the early 1900s were directed at black men in the South. The first anti-marijuana laws, in the Midwest and the Southwest in the 1910s and 20s, were directed at Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans. Today, Latino and especially black communities are still subject to wildly disproportionate drug enforcement and sentencing practices." <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war> The organizers of Decriminalize Nature Oakland say it is a civil liberty to decide how we develop our relationships with nature <https://www.decriminalizenature.org/about>.

Fighting for the decriminalization of natural occurring plants and fungi will serve as a stepping stone for a paradigm shift in drug policy.

B. Psilocybin mushrooms, Ayahuasca, Iboga, and Mescaline containing cacti i.e. Peyote have all been used ceremonially, ritualistically, and for healing purposes for thousands of years. They have medicinal, cultural and spiritual value. More recently, top universities and organizations have been running clinical trials with great success. The results are showing that these natural substances are effective for healing a variety of psychological, spiritual, and physical dis-ease ranging from addiction, to PTSD, to depression/anxiety, to cluster headaches. These substances themselves are completely non-addictive, and in fact anti-addictive. Portland is dealing with heavy rates of addiction and mental illness; *addiction and mental illness often land people in the throes of the criminal justice system*. It does not have to be that way when we have Psilocybin mushrooms, one of the world's most profound and ancient medicines, growing right here in our parks and forests. Psilocybin mushrooms grow in almost every part of the world and can also be cultivated for next to no money. In stark contrast, pharmaceuticals come at high cost and require a prescription which automatically excludes whole classes of people. This is one more step towards building cultural and spiritual unity with in our city.

C. The more communities that take a stand for these ancient natural medicines, the more doors we can open for people who are at the bottom rung of society that can utilize plants and fungi for treatment and spiritual remediation. The organizers of Decriminalize Nature Dallas are including cannabis in their efforts because Texas still holds on to seriously draconian drug laws. When we take a stand as a city, then we are empowering people all across the nation. There are thousands of people in the city of Portland who already use these ancient medicines; in order to safely decriminalize these substances, we believe we must step up education in the community. We, and other groups in the city,

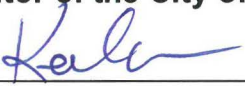
have already been providing grassroots education for some time and plan to continue at no cost to the city. This is an effort to reconnect.

If you want sources for more information, we can provide! We are also more than willing to come chat in person. Here is the resolution that the organizers of Decriminalize Nature Oakland submitted to their city council, who unanimously voted it through. We know that Police Chief Danielle Outlaw worked with Oakland Police for 19 years and progressed through the ranks. Seeing as how Oakland's Police Chief gave their blessing for the resolution in Oakland, we are hoping that as a peer, Outlaw will do the same. The Decriminalize Nature Oakland resolution is open source, we can use theirs as template. The PDF file is attached here. Also included is the Oakland framework for the resolution.

Request of Nicholas Combest to address Council regarding the national movement called Decriminalize Nature (Communication)

OCT 30 2019

PLACED ON FILE

Filed OCT 22 2019
MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland
By 
Deputy

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Hardesty		
4. Eudaly		
Wheeler		