



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

June 7, 2021

To the Honorable Members of the Overdose Emergency and Innovative Recovery (OEIR) Task Force,

We, the undersigned members of the Seattle City Council, request that the Task Force add to their work plan an examination of public policy governing psychedelic medicines, commonly referred to as 'entheogens'. The OEIR Task Force work will expand efforts for solving the local overdose crisis, drug user health inequities, and region-wide safety and health by proposing and evaluating recommendations in order to build evidence and enhance practices on innovations in recovery and person-centered interventions. Given the potential of entheogens as treatments for substance addiction and behavioral mental health conditions, we believe this topic is a suitable addition to the Task Force workplan.

Entheogens include the substances psilocybin, ayahuasca, and ibogaine, among others. Studies have documented medical benefits associated with the therapeutic consumption of these substances. Psilocybin [has been shown](#) to reduce depression and anxiety, and various entheogens are being [actively studied](#) as treatments to post traumatic stress disorder, grief, and drug addiction.

States and municipalities across the United States have been steadily liberalizing laws related to entheogens. In 2019, Denver, Colorado, via initiative, and Oakland, California, via council ordinance, passed laws decriminalizing possession of entheogens. In 2020, voters in Washington DC passed a similar initiative making enforcement of laws against entheogen possession among the lowest law enforcement priorities; while voters in the State of Oregon went a step further and legalized psilocybin prescriptions for mental health treatment. Somerville and Cambridge, Massachusetts, took action to decriminalize psilocybin in 2021.

A recent movement in Seattle, Decriminalize Nature, has engaged in extensive advocacy with City, County, and State officials demanding long overdue changes to policies on entheogens. The City Council shares the concerns of community members organizing for change, and urges OEIR to incorporate into their work plan recommendations to liberalize policy on entheogens at the state and local level.

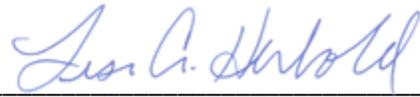
OEIR is uniquely positioned to provide recommendations to City of Seattle and King County governments, as well as the joint Seattle-King County Board and Department of Public Health on policy related to entheogens. The City Council looks forward to continued engagement with the OEIR to follow-up on the requests in this letter via our representatives on the OEIR, and putting into policy recommendations disseminated by the task force.

We appreciate your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,



Council President M. Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



Councilmember Debora Juarez



Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis



Councilmember Tammy J. Morales



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda



Councilmember Kshama Sawant