From: Jeff Juel
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: Decriminalize Nature Montana resolution
Date: Friday, June 17, 2022 4:04:56 PM

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Jeffrey Juel, and I live in Missoula.

I am writing you to voice my support of the Decriminalize Nature Montana resolution, which is a resolution supporting entheogenic plant practices and declaring that the investigation and arrest of individuals involved with the adult use of entheogenic plants on the federal schedule 1 list be amongst the lowest priority for the City of Missoula.

The resolution can be found at: https://decrimnaturemt.org/mt-resolutions

The resolution reads:

Whereas, Entheogenic Plants and Fungi, Entheogenic Plants, based on the term "entheogen", originally conceived by a working group of anthropologists and ethnobotanists in 1979,defined herein as the full spectrum of plants, fungi, and natural materials and/or their extracted compounds, limited to those containing the following types of compounds: indole amines, tryptamines, and phenethylamines; that can benefit psychological and physical wellness, support and enhance religious and spiritual practices, and can reestablish human's unalienable and direct relationship to nature; and

Whereas, 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 that the use of Entheogenic Plants have 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; and

Whereas, practices with Entheogenic 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

Whereas, seeking to improve their health and well-being through the use of Entheogenic Plants use them in fear of arrest and prosecution; and

Whereas, the Entheogenic Plant practices of certain groups are already explicitly protected in the U.S. under the doctrine of religious freedom – such as the use of ayahuasca by two churches, a Santo Daime congregation and the União do Vegetal; and

Whereas, The United Nations considers Entheogenic Plant material used for ritual purposes as excluded from Schedule 1 substances; and

Whereas, Entheogenic plants containing ibogaine, for example, have been shown to alleviate treatment resistant cases of opiate and methamphetamine addiction at significantly higher rates than all other treatments for addiction. In addition, 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; and

Whereas, Entheogenic 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 and that are can be demonstrably beneficial in treating addiction, depression, PTSD, and in catalyzing profound experiences of personal and spiritual growth; and

Whereas, Entheogenic 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 continuing use as religious sacraments in modern times; and

Whereas, psilocybin, naturally occurring in Entheogenic mushrooms, 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; and

Whereas, 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 also found continuing positive life-style changes after a 14-month follow-up; and

Whereas, the City of Missoula has declared its core values, "in the wake of a national reckoning to systemic inequities" to include Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) in Resolution 8533, and has vowed to utilize these, and their related values, as a lens through which the City of Missoula can guide future policies and practices; and

Whereas, the criminalization of entheogenic plants and fungi, instead of fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture rooted in justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, targets vulnerable populations, who are met from the community with increased difficulty in being able to access affordable housing, stable employment, and non-bias information. The greater weight of the social, cultural, and economic impacts being perpetuated against minorities and the disadvantaged. The criminalization of our direct relationship with nature, and to traditional cultures and lifestyles, is seen in the adverse impacts on the lives and livelihoods of individuals in our communities; and

Whereas, the City of Missoula 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 Entheogenic Plants and Fungi;

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Missoula that no department, agency, board, commission, officer or employee of the city, including without limitation, Missoula Police Department personnel, shall use any city funds or resources to assist in the enforcement of laws imposing criminal

penalties for the use and possession of Entheogenic Plants by adults;

Be it further resolved, that the Missoula City Council directs the City administration to instruct the City's state and federal lobbyists to work in support of decriminalizing all Entheogenic Plants and plant-based compounds that are listed on the Federal Controlled Substances Schedule 1;

Be it further resolved, that the Mayor and City Council hereby declare that it shall be the policy of the City of Missoula that the investigation and arrest of adult persons for planting, cultivating, purchasing, transporting, distributing, engaging in practices with, and/or possessing Entheogenic Plants or plant compounds on the Federal Schedule 1 list shall be amongst the lowest law enforcement priority for the City of Missoula;

Be it further resolved, That this resolution does not authorize or enable any of the following activities: commercial sales or manufacturing of these plants and fungi, possession or distributing these materials in schools, driving under the influence of these materials, or public disturbance or jeopardizing public safety;

Be it further resolved, that the Mayor and City Council call upon the Missoula County District Attorney to cease prosecution of persons involved in the use of Entheogenic Plants or plant-based compounds on the Federal Schedule 1 List;

Be it further resolved, that if any provision of this resolution is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be contrary to any statute regulation or judicial decision or its applicability to any agency person or circumstances is held invalid the validity of the remainder of this resolution and it applicability to any other agency person or circumstance shall not be affected.

Thank you for your time in hearing this matter.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Juel
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