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LD 1582

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LD 1582 - An Act To Enact the Maine Psilocybin Services Act

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Riverbird Clinic located in Portland in regards to Bill LD 1582. While the clinic's position is "neither for nor against" this specific proposal, we hope to add some insight into the conversation on how to make psilocybin available for clinical and personal use within the state of Maine. Within the past few years, other states and cities have already approved a variety of ways to make psychedelic medicines available to people. So, it is timely for Maine to consider this topic, yet adopting legislation that was generated in another state without an informed conversation about Maine's needs seems hasty at this time.

LD 1582's proposed structure of providing the psilocybin services is borrowed from the state of Oregon and would need substantial modifications if the Riverbird Clinic in Portland would be able to offer their services to the same degree of quality it's been operating from for the past two years. Riverbird Clinic currently offers legal psychedelic assisted psychotherapy through the use of Ketamine as their psychologically active medicine. If LD 1582 were to be implemented in Maine, the clinic's already existing patient care routines and successful community support structures would need to be substantially altered in order to include psilocybin into the clinic's pharmacopeia.

We agree that the regulation of psychedelic-based clinical services should be designed by established healthcare organizations, especially when riskier substances such as extracted psilocybin, MDMA, LSD and others are being used. However, research methodologies and their translation into health policy takes an extensive amount of time and there's a more immediate need to reduce the social risks that Mainers are incurring by using the naturally occurring psychedelics for reasons that range from relieving profound suffering to enhancing personal health.

Our clinic and other healthcare providers are aware of many Mainers who are currently using psilocybin mushrooms for their personal health and wellbeing, we highly encourage shifting the discussion away from the regulation of providing psilocybin and its extracts only within a clinical environment. The legislative efforts should focus on the decriminalization of naturally occurring psychedelics that people are currently using.

As evidence emerges from multiple high quality clinical research and epidemiological studies, it's becoming more clear that the medical risks of naturally occurring psychedelics are minimal compared to the social risks for people who are working with these medicines within a legal system that penalizes their use. People who are suffering from conditions such as depression, end of life anxiety, or other ailments shouldn't also incur the additional burden of possibly being incarcerated for their use of psychedelics. The evidence also shows that the original reasons why these substances were made illegal are erroneously based. When Maine is able to allow the decriminalization of naturally occurring psychedelics, trained and experienced clinics such as Riverbird would be able to extend their community services to patients who would be less fearful of incarceration, therefore reducing the risks that accrue with use that remains hidden.

In summary, we feel that the committee would best spend its time either significantly re-working this proposal to emphasize decriminalizing the use of naturally occurring psychedelics or to consider other legislation. Thank you again for taking the time to

review this testimony.