

Good afternoon. My name is Andrew Coop, and I hold a doctorate (PhD) from the University of Bristol in the UK. I have worked on the chemistry and pharmacology of substances with the potential for abuse my whole career, receiving significant NIH funding. I am Associate Dean for Students at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, I am a leader of medical psychedelic education at the University. I have worked with the US Department of Justice as an expert witness in criminal trials concerned with psychedelics, and I serve as Chair of the Task Force on the Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances.

I support SB0336 - Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances
- Extension.

The Task Force is studying four naturally occurring substances: psilocybin/psilocin (from fungi), mescaline (from cacti), and dimethyltryptamine (from plants)--all of which possess low toxicity, low abuse potential, and no known fatal human dose. These substances affect mood and perception, and have been used for millennia in spiritual ceremonies. While unique risks exist, clinical trials show efficacy for treatment-resistant depression, cancer-related anxiety, support for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, chronic pain and headache, and more.

Scientists have shown the effects are almost certainly due to what is called neurogenesis and metaplasticity. In diseases of the brain, where connections between brain cells (neurons) are different - psychedelics create both new neurons and "correct" connections between the neurons. Debate continues as to whether the beneficial effects are the physiological effects, the psychedelic (spiritual) effects, but are almost certainly a combination of both

The task force released a report, A Pathway Forward, outlining a step-wise vision for medical psychedelics, supervised-adult use, and eventually commercial sales for qualifying individuals. The extension allows additional feedback from the public of Maryland, along with further input from qualified experts as advisors, to carefully and thoughtfully develop proposed regulatory approaches to ensure the benefits of psychedelics are accessible to all adults, while ensuring safety is paramount.

Citizens of Maryland are seeking these compounds, and need a safe, regulated, and accessible market. I fully support SB 0336.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Coop', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Coop, Ph.D.

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Resources:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6851782/>
<https://www.science.org/doi/full/10.1126/sciadv.abp8283>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32098487/>
<https://reporter.nih.gov/search/GQyhb6SXwEG-8OMfl18azA/project-details/10187739>
News release: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/newsroom/news-releases/johns-hopkins-medicine-receives-first-federal-grant-for-psychedelic-treatment-research-in-50-years>
<https://psychedelicinvest.com/psychedelic-laws/>
<https://nida.nih.gov/news-events/meetings-events/2022/01/nih-workshop-psychedelics-therapeutics-gaps-challenges-opportunities>
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0269881114548296?journalCode=jopa>
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2772630>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-021-01336-3>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41593-023-01316-5>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41386-022-01389-z>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10661823>
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?term=psychedelic&locStr=Maryland&country=United%20States&state=Maryland&checkSpell=>
Task Force Report:
https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MCA/Ch793,Ch792%282024%29_2025%2810%29.pdf