



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Decriminalize Nature of Santa Cruz Officially Apologizes for the Inclusion of the Peyote Sacrament in Santa Cruz's Resolution to Decriminalize Entheogenic Plants and Fungi**

Mirando City, Texas – the National Council of Native American Churches (NCNAC), and the Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative (IPCI), join together in thanking the Decriminalize Santa Cruz Board (DSC) for issuing an apology for the lack of cultural sensitivity it displayed when advancing the resolution before the Santa Cruz City Council to decriminalize entheogenic plants and fungi. That resolution, unfortunately, included the Peyote [*Lophophora williamsii*] cacti. Peyote was included without any consultation with Indigenous communities, especially the Native American Church community. In addition to DSC's apology, they have made a pledge to continue to work with the City Council to amend the resolution, and to work with us to inform the Santa Cruz community as to the deep cultural reasons behind this decision.

DSC approached NCNAC and IPCI representatives humbly, acknowledging their ignorance and oversight, and demonstrating their sincere willingness to publicly correct their errors. We appreciate their heartfelt respect for Indigenous sovereignty, Indigenous communities, and toward Peyote practitioners who have served as guardians of this plant medicine for millennia. In addition to redacting the references to Peyote from the original resolution, the DSC has committed to including references to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) of 1978, and the Peyote amendments to AIRFA in 1994, that expressly protect peyote possession and use by members of federally recognized tribes. They've also invited future consultation with NCNAC and IPCI, and self-education on Indigenous history, culture, and spirituality, so as not to repeat their mistakes.

The NCNAC and IPCI formally accept the apology of DSC and look forward to building a continued relationship based on unity, solidarity, and allyship towards protection of Indigenous Peyote practices, and the conservation of Peyote which is a plant species in severe decline, and with spiritual, religious, and cultural connections since time immemorial.

The NCNAC and IPCI also welcome dialogue with all other decriminalization efforts across the United States, and globally, to spread information concerning the current Peyote crises in both Texas and Mexico.

To learn more about Peyote conservation and to provide support to the Initiative, please visit the IPCI website at <https://www.ipci.life> or contact: Miriam Volat – IPCI Executive Director, [info@ipci.life](mailto:info@ipci.life) Link to the Decriminalize Santa Cruz Apology Statement: <https://www.ipci.life/pressreleases>