



# Native American Youth and Family Center

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April 9, 2021

Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

RE: House Bill 5505

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction,

My name is Miranda Mishan, I work at the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) in Portland, Oregon as the Housing and Economic Development Policy Coordinator. I write to you today to share my support for SB 5505 and the

The Native American Youth and Family Center is a gathering space for the Portland metro area Native American community to practice tradition and teach culture in a safe and inviting space. NAYA's wraparound programs directly serves over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 Native Americans living in Portland's growing Native American community a year. With a 10-acre campus in Portland's Cully neighborhood, NAYA is the city's Native American gathering center where clients access a continuum of educational, asset-building, and self-sufficiency programs. Over the last four decades, NAYA has evolved from a volunteer-led organization coming together to give Native American youth a place to engage in sports and recreation, to an organization that employs more than 130 staff members and with an annual operational budget of more than \$10 million.

At NAYA, we know that a safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need. With this in mind, we offer strong organizational support in favor of \$250 million in funding for the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) program and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds. The LIFT program has a demonstrated ability to serve the housing needs of communities of color and rural communities throughout Oregon, and it deserves renewed commitment and expansion. As you already know, we are experiencing a statewide housing crisis, which is most acutely felt by communities of color, particularly in the Native American community. Rising housing costs have forced many of our clients to leave Portland, which means leaving their neighborhoods, schools, services, and sometimes even their jobs. In the last decade, hundreds of Native community members have left the Cully neighborhood, making it harder for them to access our center-based, culturally specific services.

Thanks to LIFT funding and our partnership with the Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA), the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, Community Development Partners and Oregon Housing and Community Services, we are accomplishing some remarkable things in our efforts to provide affordable housing and robust services to the Native American community. In January 2020, we opened the doors to Nesika Illahee, creating the first tribal preference affordable housing



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project in Portland. At Nesika Illahee, 93% of the heads of household are Native American, and the average household income is 27% AMI, with one-third of households at or below 10% AMI. While 2020 has been a uniquely challenging year due to COVID-19, we have seen the community grow and remain committed to resident success.

With our partnership with NARA Northwest, we can provide medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare through a culturally responsive lens. The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz have made a significant investment of \$2 million, funding resident services for 15 years and allows us to establish a Native preference for the community. This level of tribal investment in an urban affordable housing community is unprecedented and would not have been possible without your commitment to the LIFT program. With continued funding for permanent supportive and affordable housing construction, NAYA can replicate and build on the success of Nesika Illahee.

We urge your support for the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds in SB 5505.

Thank you for your time and for your service.

Sincerely,

Miranda Mishan  
Housing & Economic Development Policy Coordinator  
Native American Youth & Family Center  
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