



Native American Youth and Family Center

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March 31, 2023

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capitol Construction

Re: House Bill 5005 – Support, Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Funding

The Portland urban Native community is descended from over 380 Tribes; many are multi-tribal and multi-ethnic. The Portland-metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River. The Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) 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 serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impact more than 10,000 Native Americans living in Portland's growing Native American community annually. 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 150 staff members and with an annual operating budget of more than \$15 million.

At NAYA, we believe everyone deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. We write in support of House Bill 5005, allocating \$906M in General Obligation Bond investments for the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) program, LIFT Homeownership, and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). More specifically, the \$154 million dedicated toward the LIFT Homeownership Program (LIFT HO) funding. 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. Since its creation in 2015, LIFT HO has demonstrated a significant impact by providing homeownership opportunities in a market where the dream of homeownership is becoming further out of reach, particularly for communities of color and families earning below 80% area median income.

Our communities are experiencing a statewide housing crisis most acutely felt by communities of color, particularly in the Native American community. Rising housing costs and inflation have forced many community members to leave Portland, 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 accessing our center-based, culturally specific services harder. The Oregon Legislature should invest in increased capacity for LIFT HO, so we

can take serious action on creating safe, stable, and affordable homes that Oregonians with low incomes can afford, keeping our communities from being displaced.

At NAYA, we have created a thriving homeownership program supports community in obtaining stable housing for themselves and their families. We have resources available for our community members, including homeownership coaching, financial education, and homebuyer education. With the help of LIFT HO funding, we can help these families further by knowing that we can secure them a house within the community they have come to know and love. HB 5005 would provide the funding to secure adequate, safe, and stable housing for both renters and future home buyers.

At NAYA, we hope to build strong new communities throughout the state that stabilize families and give them new opportunities. We are poised to make significant strides in meeting the affordable housing needs of Oregonians, but we need your continued support. We strongly encourage you to fund HB 5005 this session.

Thank you,

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