



February 8, 2024

Chair Bynum, Vice Chair Diehl, Vice Chair Nguyen, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Re: House Bill 4041 – Economic Equity Investment Program (EEIP), Support

Chair Bynum, Vice Chair Diehl, Vice Chair Nguyen, and Members of the Committee. My name is William Miller (Blackfeet/Cherokee), and I serve as the Executive Director of the NAYA Action Fund. I'm writing in support of House Bill 4041, the Economic Equity Investment Program (EEIP). The EEIP, established in 2022 through Senate Bill 1579, has been nothing short of a beacon of hope for historically marginalized communities like the Native community.

The significance of the EEIP cannot be overstated. With initial funding of \$15 million, this program has provided a lifeline for many Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Oregonians, offering avenues for economic advancement that were previously inaccessible or overlooked. Through a competitive selection process, 36 organizations across the state have been empowered to deliver vital programming and resources to eligible beneficiaries, specifically for our BIPOC communities.

The program covers four broad areas of support: ownership of land, entrepreneurship and business development, workforce development, and intergenerational wealth building. These pillars are vital for uplifting BIPOC communities out of poverty and into sustained economic prosperity. The EEIP-funded organizations are culturally responsive and deeply committed to addressing the longstanding economic disparities faced by BIPOC folks. The organizations involved understand the unique needs and barriers that we encounter, including those in rural areas, and are dedicated to closing the equity gaps that have persisted for generations.

The program's holistic approach reflects a commitment to advancing economic equity for those who have historically been excluded from wealth-building opportunities. However, it's important to note that the EEIP is currently operating on one-time funds. To ensure the sustained success of the program and provide opportunities to uplift and advance BIPOC communities, ongoing support and investments are imperative. We ask you to support House Bill 4041 and fund the full \$30M request.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "W. Miller", is placed above the printed name.

William Miller  
Executive Director