



March 18, 2025

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Re: House Bill 5024 – Business Development Funding, Support

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is William Miller. I'm Blackfoot and Cherokee and I serve as the Executive Director of the NAYA Action Fund, a Native-led organization that builds political power and advances advocacy for Native communities in Oregon and Washington. I appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in support of HB 5024.

The Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), our sister organization, is deeply committed to advocating for the well-being and self-determination of Native American communities throughout Oregon and Washington. HB 5024 provides critical funding for infrastructure, economic development, and arts programs that directly impact Indigenous families and the broader community. Investments in business development, infrastructure, and the arts are vital in uplifting historically marginalized communities and ensuring long-term economic sustainability.

The impact of this funding is already evident through programs like NAYA's Native Business Accelerator and our Native Marketplace, which provide direct technical assistance, mentorship, and access for Native entrepreneurs. Since June 2023, these programs have collectively supported 248 entrepreneurs and small business owners, equipping them with culturally specific technical assistance, access to capital, and opportunities to showcase and sell goods through Native-focused marketplaces. One of the most inspiring success stories comes from Good Rain Farm, whose owner, a graduate of the NBA program, struggled for years with financial instability and land insecurity, forced to relocate her farm repeatedly due to expiring leases. With support from NAYA's technical assistance services, she successfully purchased a 13.5-acre "forever farm" in Troutdale in November 2024 after 379 days of negotiations. This milestone represents more than just a new location, it ensures long-term stability and expansion opportunities, allowing her to offer Community Supported Agriculture boxes and educational programs for the community.

Since June 2023, the Native Made Marketplaces have supported 129 vendors, 66.5% of whom identify as Native. Businesses like Hózhó Herbal Creations and RRB Native Jewelry transitioned from pop-up markets to brick-and-mortar locations with support from partner organizations, amplifying the kind of growth and opportunity that targeted business development investments can create. These businesses not only support economic self-sufficiency but also contribute to cultural preservation and intergenerational wealth-building.

HB 5024 appropriates essential resources to the Oregon Business Development Department, funding vital initiatives that promote economic stability, innovation, and cultural preservation. The funding allocated for business innovation and trade will help Native entrepreneurs and small



businesses thrive. Access to grants and financial support will continue to drive economic self-sufficiency and build generational wealth in our communities.

Native families have endured systemic underinvestment for generations, and this bill presents an opportunity to rectify these disparities. NAYA urges the committee to support HB 5024 to ensure that the economic, cultural, and infrastructure needs of Oregon's Native communities are prioritized.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Miller", is written over a large, semi-circular graphic element that resembles a stylized sunburst or fan. The graphic is composed of several colored segments: a light pink segment at the top, a light yellow segment on the right, and a light grey segment on the left. The segments are separated by white, pointed rays that converge towards a central white point.

William Miller
Executive Director