



Native American Youth and Family Center

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February 14, 2020

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

RE: Senate Bill 5201 – Support

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), we are writing to support HB 5201, and the Speakers request for \$50 million in General Obligation, Article XI-Q bonds to build affordable homes across Oregon (and/or) \$20 million for Lottery Bonds to maintain existing affordable homes.

The Portland urban Native community is descended from over 380 Tribes and 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 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 \$11 million.

At NAYA, we believe everyone deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. To this, NAYA offers our strong support in favor of \$50 million in funding for the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) program for affordable housing construction over the next biennium. 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 from the legislature 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.

Nesika Illahee, meaning “Our Place” in the Chinook language, is the first time these partners have come together to construct affordable housing for tribal members and other Native families in Portland using generous funding from the Siletz Tribe’s Indian Housing Block Grant. Those funds have typically been used for affordable housing activities within reservation lands. All of the Nesika Illahee units will comply with the Fair Housing Act, with 20 of the units reserved for enrolled members of federally recognized tribes including Siletz. The project is currently under construction and the completion date is targeted to be November 2019. NAYA is the lead nonprofit partner on Nesika Illahee, funded through the first round of LIFT funding and which is currently undergoing construction.

The services to the community are culturally specific, including medical, dental and behavioral health care through NARA's clinics. The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz have made a significant investment of \$2 million, which funds 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 to our knowledge unprecedented, and it would not have been possible without your commitment to the LIFT program. Nesika Illahee is located half a mile away from NAYA’s campus, which allows residents to easily access our services.

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 major strides in meeting the affordable housing needs of Oregonians, but we need your continued support. I strongly encourage you to fund the LIFT program at \$50 million this session.

Thank you for your dedication to public service, and for all that you do for our state.

Thank you,



B. Paul Lumley
Executive Director