



April 18, 2023

Governor Tina Kotek  
Senate President Rob Wagner  
Speaker Dan Rayfield  
Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner  
Co-Chair Representative Tawna Sanchez  
Joint Ways & Means Committee  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek and Legislative Leaders::

RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES

We, the undersigned legislators, support investments that promote economic development in economically distressed communities. Wealth creation is a powerful tool for racial and economic justice especially for historically marginalized people.

As the state's leadership with the power to determine how best to budget public funds, we ask you to strongly consider investing in the following:

**\$200,000- Public Procurement Study.** Fund a study of the state's procurement system that assesses it as an economic development tool with specific recommendations on how procurement can be deployed in economically distressed communities. This request can be accomplished through a Christmas tree allocation.

Procurement is an underutilized economic development tool that has proven successful to reverse the effects of depressed economic conditions. Oregon needs to better understand how much money goes into public contracts, who gets the contracts, and how we can direct contracts to meet the state's economic development goals. An Oregon specific study will empower us to make smart and strategic procurement decisions that can target specific communities. This request can be accomplished through an omnibus budget bill allocation.

**\$4 million Restoration - Business Technical Assistance Grants for culturally specific technical assistance.** Restore \$4 million in funding in Business Oregon's GRB budget from \$5 million to \$9 million. These funds are used by culturally specific chambers of commerce that assist their community members. This request can be accomplished through an omnibus budget bill allocation or restoration in Business Oregon's budget bill.

A cut in funding would lead to a commensurate cut in programming by all previously funded organizations and programs. Oregonians deserve better than a half-funded effort. The state of Oregon can instead recognize the moral and economic imperative of investment into our disadvantaged communities by demonstrating our fiscal commitment to organizations who help create generational wealth through successful business ownership. Generational wealth is the greatest tool against social and economic disenfranchisement.

The benefits of technical assistance have been proven. For example, the Oregon Native American Chamber has been able to better serve marginalized urban and reservation based Native communities. This has resulted in a 600% increase in the development of off reservation enterprises throughout Oregon. We believe that properly funded technical assistance programs are crucial in the fight toward narrowing the gaps in racial wealth disparities in the state.

Together these two investments take advantage of the wholesale changes underway from Governor Brown's equity in procurement executive order and continued under Governor Kotek, the creation of the Economic and Business Equity Manager position, and the work of the Racial Justice Council's Economic Opportunity Committee. They will maximize the impact of these changes for the betterment of all underserved Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Representative Janelle Bynum  
(HD-39)



Representative Annessa Hartman  
(HD-40)



Representative Daniel Nguyen  
(HD-38)



Representative Khanh Pham  
(HD-46)



Senator Mark Meek  
(SD-20)



Senator Aaron L. Woods  
(SD 13)



Representative Hai Pham  
(HD-36)



Senator Kayse Jama (SD-24)



Senator James Manning (SD-7)



Representative Nathan Sosa  
(HD-30)



Representative Ricki Ruiz (HD-50)