



Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97218 | p 503.288.8177 | f 503.288.1260 | nayapdx.org

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

RE: House Bill 5005 – Support

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of House Bill 5005. For the record, my name is Paul Lumley, citizen of the Yakama Nation, and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director at the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) located in Portland, Oregon.

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 \$10 million.

At NAYA, we believe everyone deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. To this, I offer my strong support in favor of \$200 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, and Community Development Partners, 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 will be 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 will allow residents to easily access our services.

As a founding member of the Coalition of Communities of Color – of which I am the Board Chair, we continue to seek out new partnerships in our cities and in our rural communities. 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 \$200 million through the next biennium.

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

Thank you,



B. Paul Lumley
Executive Director