

My name is Jean Hamilton and I am the Director of Program Development with the Land Access and Opportunity Board. I am here to ask you to support the LAOB with an appropriation of \$1.97 million in FY25 to support our baseline operational expenses and allow us to keep the powerful momentum of our newly launched programming.

Two years ago, you and your colleagues in the Vermont Legislature created the LAOB in response to calls from the community to address systemic marginalization and oppression that continues to disadvantage certain communities from having safe and reliable access to housing and land. Last year, you designated \$1.2M to empower the LAOB to carry forward the actions laid out for you in our Sunrise Report. With that investment, the LAOB has built a sturdy foundation including active Board engagement, a clearly defined MOU with our administrative host, VHCB, and our newly staffed Co-Directorship.

With staff in place, the LAOB is now launching our programming, including engaging the wisdom of our communities and their lived experiences through community events and working with partners across the state to identify and alleviate the barriers that create persistent gaps in home ownership and land access for Black and Brown communities, the LGBTQIA+ community, and those with stigmatized differences like developmental disabilities and survivors of mental illness.

Resourcing the work of the LAOB is an important step we can all take towards fulfilling the equity goals laid out by the State of Vermont. Please support the Land Access and Opportunity Board with an appropriation of \$1.97 million in FY25 to support our baseline operations and continue our programmatic investments.

Thank you for your time and service to our communities.