

## Land Access & Opportunity Board - request of \$4.8 million

February 21, 2023

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today. My name is Mindy Blank, and I am here to advocate for Appropriations to sustain and expand the work of the Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB), which is housed with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. I am a member of Seeding Power, the group of community organizers that crafted and advocated for H.273, the BIPOC Land Access & Opportunity Act, the original legislation behind the LAOB that supports the formation of this Board. This Board has advisory powers to help state agencies, departments, and committees integrate equity measures and is mandated to create programs that improve housing and land accessibility for marginalized communities and protected classes.

The LAOB has incredible community support behind it, constituents in every county across the state, nonprofits, businesses, philanthropy - which you will be able to see shortly in a collective letter that is being circulated. The LAOB submitted their [Sunrise Report](#) last week, and in it, they've worked out the nuts and bolts of the continuation of this Board. They need at least \$1.2 million annually for baseline operations, and we are advocating for an allocation of \$4.8 million this year so that the Board can function for the next four years and do their work with certainty. **It is critical to ensure that this Board can continue its important work for the next four years and achieve future success by committing now to a total appropriation of \$4.8 million.** We urge you to include the LAOB in your budget this year.

Thank you for hearing this request.

Sincerely,  
Mindy Blank  
*Member, Seeding Power*  
*Co-Director, Community Resilience Organizations*