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Hello and thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today. My name is Shane Rogers, and I am here to advocate for an appropriation of \$4.8 million this year to sustain and expand the work of the Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB), which is housed within the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

I am a member of Seeding Power Vermont, the group of community organizers that crafted and advocated for H.273, the BIPOC Land Access & Opportunity Act. This was the original legislation that set out to create - through the LAOB and the powers defined in its creation - a reparative and equitable framework to address the systemic marginalization of a whole range of folks in regard to land and home access and ownership. 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 communities subjected to marginalization and protected classes.

The LAOB has incredible community support behind it. Constituents from your legislative districts and the counties you live in have spoken up to support this Board. Nonprofits, businesses, philanthropy, and more are joining our call for an appropriation of \$4.8 million to be made for the continued work of the Land Access and Opportunity Board - support 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 detailed they need at least \$1.2 million annually for baseline operations. That is why we are advocating for an appropriation 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. I implore you to please commit now to include the LAOB in your budget this year for a total appropriation of \$4.8 million.**

Thank you for hearing this request.

Sincerely,
Shane Rogers
Community Organizer, Seeding Power