



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 4, 2022

Mr. Brent Leggs  
Executive Director, African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
2600 Virginia Ave. NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Mr. Leggs:

I write in support of the Billy Webb Elks Lodge (BWEL) application for funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's (NTHP) African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. The BWEL will use these funds to hire a part-time Executive Director/Operations Manager to manage the preservation of this important cultural site in Portland, Oregon.

The BWEL is a historic landmark for the African American community in Portland. Built in 1926, the BWEL housed the first Young Women's Christian Association that welcomed members of color. During the 1950s, the BWEL served as a meeting place for many civil rights and racial justice groups in Portland, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Oregon Association of Colored Women, the Urban League, and the Congress of Racial Equality. Today, the BWEL continues to be a resource and cultural symbol for African Americans in Portland.

Funding from the NTHP would support the BWEL in hiring its first staff member, a part-time Executive Director/Operations Manager to manage renovation, facility rental, membership engagement, strategic planning, and other operational needs. This grant award would cover salary, benefits, and administrative costs.

Hiring an Executive Director/Operations Manager is critical to the BWEL's preservation efforts. The BWEL was damaged by a fire in September 2021, and the new Executive Director/Operations Manager would be responsible for overseeing the rehabilitation of the building, in addition to community engagement, increasing the organization's revenue stream,

recruiting new members, and implementing the findings revealed in the NTHP-funded feasibility study conducted by the National Association of Minority Contractors-Portland.

As you continue your important work awarding funding to historic preservation projects around the country, I ask that you give the Billy Webb Elks Lodge's application your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Earl Blumenauer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress