

In the past year, Oregon's county and state fairgrounds stepped up when our communities needed them most. Through the global pandemic, wildfire relief efforts, and now COVID vaccination efforts, our fairgrounds were transformed overnight into testing centers, makeshift hospitals, shelter for thousands of people and animals, and now mass vaccination clinics.

Meanwhile, our fairs, youth education events, cultural festivals, trade shows and expositions, equestrian events, craft & hobby shows, consumer shows, non-profit fundraisers, and community social events were almost all cancelled. This left counties, their fairgrounds and service support organizations financially strapped and ineligible for most federal COVID relief funding.

Our fairgrounds are an economic hub in our community. Most recently in 2019:

- Fairgrounds hosted 6.15 million people during annual fairs and over 17,000 local events, bringing business to local hotels, restaurants, retail establishments, and service providers.
- Over 600 non-profit groups used our fairgrounds to generate more than \$10 million in charitable donations.
- 10,000 volunteers dedicated over 200,000 hours of volunteer service at their local fairgrounds.
- Fairgrounds directly employed 479 workers with a payroll of over \$10 million

A recent economic study by Oregon State University estimated that fairgrounds generated an economic footprint of approximately \$52 million in output, \$28 million in value-added income, and 867 full- and part-time jobs.

HB 3173 will eliminate an old funding cap put in place years ago and provide an additional investment of approximately \$165,000 per county per year. The bill also funds a much-needed capital infrastructure study so that we can make sure fairgrounds are ready for events and more importantly, emergency disaster response.

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