

State of Oregon  
WALLOWA COUNTY  
BOARD of COMMISSIONERS  
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March 24, 2021

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources; Honorable Chair Witt, and members of the Committee.

**RE: House Bill 3173**

Chair Witt,

On behalf of the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners, I am presenting the following statement,

County Fairs and Fairgrounds are important to the culture, and are the heart, of many communities. Fairground facilities are the places we gather for many community events, such as fund raising, whether it be for scholarships, people in need following a tragic event, for our hospital, and many other needs of our community. These are the facilities we gather in to celebrate with fairs, rodeos, graduation parties, weddings and more. These are the facilities in which we gather to mourn and remember and we gather here to handle other emergencies.

The fairgrounds in Wallowa County has the largest indoor meeting facility in our County and as such it is utilized on a year-round basis. Students utilize for these grounds for 4/H, FFA, and other events. Many other organizations that provide enhancement to the education of our youth also use these facilities. In fact, 95% of county students have participated in organizational events at our fair grounds/event center, and it's not a coincidence this county also boasts the highest high school graduation rate per capita in this state.

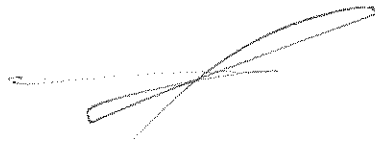
In times of emergency our fairgrounds and facilities are identified and prepared to serve as overflow for the hospital. The indoor facility has been the site for Covid-19 vaccinations/screening, an Incident Command post for fires, flood, and natural catastrophic events. If the Cascadia Subduction takes place on our West Coast, we will be able to provide shelter and services here.

However, if HB 3173 were only about providing a place for a County Fair it would be a worthwhile investment. The fair alone leverages thousands of hours of staff and volunteer time towards education, and facility maintenance/improvements. Our young people qualify for State Fair here and then make the big trip to Salem for an even more broadened experience, make

lifelong friends, network, and elevate their competitive performances. Fairs are more than I can ever put into words; it's the smile of a child receiving their first ribbon regardless of the placement color of the ribbon, it's our community pulling together for the benefit our most precious resource (our kids). At the conclusion of our fair, we have the market animal sale and again the community steps up to support, providing upwards of \$300,000 to the young participants and the bulk of this money is funneled toward college scholarships.

These facilities are for more than a small county fair; they are for the security of our State's emergency response capacity, they are a part of the enhanced education of our young people, and they are a part of the culture of our communities.

Thank You for supporting HB 3173

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Nash', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Todd Nash  
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