



March 25, 2021

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners**  
**Policy Position**  
**HB 3173: Relating to Capital Planning Funds for County Fairgrounds**

**Clackamas County supports HB 3173:** The Board of County Commissioners supports HB 3173, which directs the Oregon Business Development Department to develop a master plan for county fairground capital construction, and to work with each county fair board, board of directors for each fair association, and board of each fair district to identify 5- and 10-year plans for each county fairground. The bill also removes the cap on the amount of Oregon State Lottery dollars that may be allocated to county fairs.

Since 1907, the Clackamas County Fair and Event Center has entertained, educated, and enriched millions of visitors of all ages and from all walks of life. The current fairgrounds were acquired in 1909, and over the years, several major capital improvements were undertaken to increase capacity and modernize facilities. Some of these improvements include construction of the Main Pavilion in 1924, construction of Horning Hall in 1952, construction of the Cloverleaf Kitchen in 1969, and construction of a new Rodeo Arena Grandstand in 2000.

Unfortunately, the costs associated with construction of new capital assets, as well as those of repairing/remodeling existing assets, have eclipsed the revenues that the Fair and Event Center generates. This has made it challenging for the Fair and Event Center to maintain its capital assets. For example, in 2014, the Livestock Barn roof was deemed structurally unsound, and the entire structure was demolished. Funds have not been available to replace the Livestock Barn, and for the last seven years, temporary T-structures have been rented every year to support the fair. This loss is felt not only during the annual Fair, but year-round, as the community is deprived of much-needed space for large community and social events.

County Fairs throughout the State face similar challenges in repairing, replacing, and constructing the capital assets necessary to serve the needs of today's fairgoers. We believe a state-wide assessment will not only reveal capital funding challenges common to all County Fairs, but could serve as an important first step in developing a comprehensive, statewide strategy to ensure that all County Fairs can sustainably address their short- and long-term capital construction needs and continue serving fairgoers for generations to come.

We urge a "YES" vote for HB 3173.

Please contact Chris Lyons at [clyons@clackamas.us](mailto:clyons@clackamas.us) for more information.