

Submitter: Jill Ingalls

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB2510

In support of increased funding for County Fairs (removing current cap)

Over 600 non-profit groups use our fairgrounds to generate more than \$10 million in charitable donations. Fairgrounds hosted educational, cultural, agricultural, and economic events for all ages and continue to seek further inclusion of communities of color.

Fairgrounds employ over 470 people across Oregon. But then there are the small business that also utilize the grounds. Our little company alone rents fairgrounds to produce events, many of our events have hundreds of vendors that represent small businesses across Oregon. These vendors all are able to generate income from the event in which they participate. In addition to private industry benefitting from temporary events, many non profits enjoy the use of these facilities as gathering places where youth and adults meet for fundraisers, education and community benefit. In the last few years the pressure on Oregon County Fairgrounds was immense from COVID evacuation sites, emergency shelters for fire evacuees and more. Over the years our grounds have been struggling to fund maintenance, due in part to their responsibility to the community as a gathering place, and low rent property. The live event industry needs facilities to support marketplaces, concerts, shows and entertainment venues for our community well being and economic development. The County Fair is the annual celebration for each county to bring residents together in celebration of their place, community and youth. The increases in costs to maintain, improve and keep up with the demand to the community has not been adequately funded. Please support this bill and empower our County Fairgrounds to continue to be a driving force for our communities, through economic opportunities, emergency safe places, celebration venues and support to our youth programs that rely on such support. By now you've heard the numbers of volunteers and the impact just from the fairs. But just on one marketplace event recently over 130 vendors, wineries, Oregon culinary products, cottage industry, arts and crafts, local breweries and commercial products enjoyed a two day event which infused tens of thousands of dollar in sales to those little businesses. That location was at a County Fairgrounds. Please support the increase - these venues need funds to complete repairs and upgrades in order to continue to provide for our communities.