

During the past several difficult years, county fairgrounds and the state fair stepped up when our communities needed them the most. Through the global pandemic, wildfire relief efforts, and testing and vaccination efforts, fairgrounds were transformed overnight into testing centers, makeshift hospitals, shelter for thousands of people and animals, and 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 in 2020. This left counties and their fairgrounds financially strapped, ineligible for most federal COVID relief funding, while aging infrastructure continued to deteriorate. Fairgrounds are the economic hub in our community. Each year, Fairgrounds host approximately 6 million people during annual fairs and local events, bringing business to local hotels, restaurants, retail establishments, and service providers. Over 600 non-profit groups use our fairgrounds to generate more than \$10 million in charitable donations. Fairgrounds host educational, cultural, agricultural, and economic events for all ages and continue to seek further inclusion of communities of color and people with disabilities. Junior Livestock Auction receipts at fairs of over \$12 million go to fund educational scholarships for youth entering food production and agriculture education beyond high school. 10,000 volunteers dedicate over 200,000 hours of volunteer service at their local fairgrounds. Fairgrounds directly employ 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 HB 2510 will eliminate an outdated funding cap put in place years ago and provide an additional investment of approximately \$165,000 per county per year.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 most importantly, emergency disaster response.

Multnomah County Fair, a tradition since 1907, operates in the largest county by population, but has not received financial support from our County government since the 1990's. The fair is operated by volunteers and funded by the lottery money and small donations and grants. The additional lottery funding proposed will ensure that we can continue to offer youth development opportunities at our fair as well as providing healthy activities to engage our community members.

Please vote YES on HB 2510.

Larry Smith, Board President
Friends of Multnomah County Fair