

Submitter: Kristen Shelman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure: SB451

Honorable Chair Meek, honorable vice chair Boquist, & members of the committee. For the record my name is Kristen Shelman, and I'm a Harney County Commissioner.

I support Senate Bill 451.

1. The Harney County Fairgrounds is a hub in our community. I serve as the liaison to our Fair Board. I see firsthand the number of diverse events that take place year-round. There are around 90+ events scheduled at the fairgrounds throughout the year. It is the only venue that is large enough for most of these events to occur.

2. I will name just a few of the diverse events that are held at our Fairgrounds annually. Some of these are our local Tribe's Pow Wow, 4H, FFA, Harney County Park and Recreation, local youth clubs, weddings, fundraising events, a staging area for our Emergency Management Team, BLM, and Forest Service fire crews, local Range Fire Protection Agencies, vendors events, dog, llama, horse, and cattle shows, a Demolition Derby, 6 rodeos, Migrant Bird Festival, an equine therapy program for local foster kids and kids at risk, and Public Health vaccine clinics. It also is one of the few places for dog owners to exercise their dogs and be able to care for their pets.

3. Harney County's budget can barely support essential staffing services that are needed to run a Fairgrounds. We will never be able to make need improvements without help from the State of Oregon and from your committee. I ask at this time that you open a better way to provide stable funding for long term investments that are needed to maintain our fairgrounds and support the important uses for the public at our fairgrounds.

4. In the Bill language it directly references the "County Fair Fund". I appreciate seeing language in the Bill that references back to ORS 565. There is a lack of understanding in the general public and even at the county level of how County Fair Funding is supported and Fair Boards are authorized to use those funds through statute as stated in ORS "565.325 County fair fund; purpose; source of moneys. (1) Each county that holds a county fair shall establish and maintain a fair fund. The fair fund may be expended only for the promotion and operation of the county fair and to provide, maintain and improve county fairgrounds, buildings, facilities and improvements on the county fairgrounds for the county fair and other events authorized by the county fair board."

5. Bills like SB 451 and HB 2510 will help to improve the ability of Fair Boards throughout the State of Oregon to do the work that by statute they are required to do. They have lacked the financial support at sufficient levels to accomplish what they are by statute are supposed to maintain in order to produce a County Fair. It has often made the Boards the target of criticism because of the lack of funds needed to

make much needed improvements to the fairgrounds.

I appreciate your time today. The work you will do today can have a huge impact for our County and other counties across Oregon. I welcome any committee member to come and enjoy one of the many events held at the Harney County Fairgrounds. I ask for your support of SB 451. Thank you, Commissioner Kristen Shelman.