



April 24, 2023

Joint Committee on Weights and Means
Oregon State Legislature
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center (OSFEC), like all of our members Fairs, was required to close and cease all operations March 2020 through much of 2021 due to the pandemic. Just recently we have seen our members returning to pre COVID19 status. This closure resulted in tough financial decisions, the reduction of staff, the elimination of the 2020 Oregon State Fair, and shuttering of the property. The Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center estimated revenue loss for the State Fair and 185-acre, 12-structure year-round exposition rental business of just over \$6 million dollars.

The Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center opened its doors to help the Oregon community with their many needs over the past 2 years. In 2020, the emergency and evacuee operations held at the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center totaled 236 days or 65% of the year. During 2021 the OSFEC opened their doors for use 262 days, which was 72% of the year to host OHA Medical Facilities; Oregon Department of Education and OSU mask storage; Santiam Canyon Wildfire Evacuee Center; Cold Weather Houseless Shelter; wildfire hazard waste storage; animal shelter and sorting area; and numerous Covid-19 Testing and Vaccination Centers.

During these events the OSFEC was made aware that the Oregon State Fair & Exposition Center fails to meet the minimum requirements to maintain an efficient and effective Regional Emergency and Evacuee Center. OSFEC was strained with limited resources to keep the grounds rentable and safe. The OSFEC has established a list of requirements based on the feedback received from partners that utilized the grounds for emergency purposes. To effectively function as a Regional Emergency and Evacuee Center, the OSFEC is in dire need of the requested items to be funded to prepare for the future emergency needs of the community to ensure fire, life, and safety needs are met. In a 2020 Facility Assessment the following needs were identified:

- Replacement and repair of leaking building roofs
- Alarm and security upgrades
- HVAC repair and installation
- LED lighting upgrades
- Messaging installation and upgrades
- Asphalt repairs and installation

- Replacement of current condemned building to provide a community kitchen, emergency housing and storage
- Water safety and filling stations
- Purchase of generators
- Livestock building upgrades

OSFEC receives State funding of a little less than \$1 million per biennium to be used for all things funded by the general fund. Historically these monies help to offset usual and customary operational expenses. Additional sources of funding include revenue from yearly Expo business and the annual Oregon State Fair. These two revenue sources are continually reviewed to pinpoint real or potential revenue shortfalls. OSFEC utilizes a proven and effective financial model that includes, but is not limited to, profit and loss reporting; balance sheet and revenue aging reports. This information is submitted for approval and guidance of the Oregon State Fair Council six times per year. An independent audit/review is performed yearly as well as a daily Fair-time reconciliation. The Council directed the financial modeling which has allowed us to limit the possibility of cash flow crises.

Funding would allow the OSFEC to prepare for future emergency needs and infrastructure improvements. The OSFEC facility is the living room for their Oregon community and they want to welcome humans and animals with safety as a top priority.

Sincerely,



Sarah Cummings
President and CEO