

HB 2136 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Action Date: 02/20/25

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 4-0-3-0

Yeas: 4 - Grayber, Skarlatos, Tran, Watanabe

Exc: 3 - Boice, Evans, Lewis

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/4, 2/6, 2/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the Department of Emergency Management to develop and implement an infrastructure improvement grant program for fairgrounds designated as emergency evacuation sites.

Detailed Summary

Appropriates \$20 million to the Department of Emergency Management to develop a grant program for power, water, fire, telecommunications, and sewer infrastructure improvements at fairgrounds that are used as evacuation sites. Directs the department to develop a grantmaking process and requires grantees to submit annual progress reports. Sunsets January 2, 2029. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The history and role of fairgrounds as emergency community shelters and evacuation sites
- Examples of the infrastructure needs of fairgrounds that serve as evacuation sites
- Current revenue streams for fairgrounds
- County support for grant program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, multiple wildfires burned over one million acres of land statewide in 2020. Approximately 500,000 people were under evacuation status at one time or another, and more than 40,000 people had to evacuate their homes. While Oregon’s state and county fairgrounds had previously sheltered community members and livestock during emergencies, those facilities provided lifesaving shelter to evacuees during the 2020 fires.