

Date:	February 3rd, 2025
To:	Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane, and Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee
From:	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Justin Low
Subject:	Support – SB 780

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 780. For the record, my name is Justin Low, and I am a Legislative Affairs Manager offering testimony on behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC).

The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) is a non-partisan member organization that advocates on issues that unite all county governing bodies and have an impact on county functions, governance, budgets, and services.

Fairgrounds play an important role in civic life in every county across Oregon. County fairs give communities a chance to learn about local culture, local products, and local industries, and celebrate the arts and crafts of local makers. Fairs also play an important role in education, giving individuals a chance to see the inner workings of the systems that produce food and get hands-on experience with how those critical systems work.

County fairgrounds also play an important role in emergency management and disaster mitigation, providing safe gathering places throughout Oregon. Fairgrounds are often used as staging areas for firefighters or multi-agency emergency responders during disasters, and spaces where evacuees can congregate and receive assistance and/or shelter livestock. Additionally, fairgrounds provide space where large-scale public healthcare services can take place, like vaccination clinics during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many counties, however, do not have sufficient funding to maintain their fairgrounds facilities adequately. By eliminating the funding cap placed on proceeds from the Oregon State Lottery to the County Fair Account, the State can help ensure that fairgrounds throughout Oregon are properly maintained for community gatherings and prepared for critical emergency needs. Thank you for your time and work on this important issue.

Best,

Justin Low

Legislative Affairs Manager for Governance and Revenue