



JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

County Administration

Shannon Bell

Senior Deputy County Administrator

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February 4, 2025

Senator Mark Meek, Chair
State of Oregon
Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
900 Court Street NE, S-417
Salem OR 97301
Sen.MarkMeek@oregonlegislature.gov

Senator Mike McLane, Vice-Chair
State of Oregon
Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
900 Court Street NE, S-301
Salem OR 97301
sen.mikemclane@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: Support of Oregon Senate Bill 780 (2025)

Dear Chair Meek, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue:

I am writing to express my strong support for Oregon Senate Bill (SB) 780 (2025), which seeks to remove the cap on allocations from the Administrative Services Economic Development Fund to the County Fair Account. This Act is critical for the continued operation and sustainability of our County fairgrounds, which serves as a vital hub for our community, our youth, and our future.

Since 1998, our fairgrounds have received the same allocation of \$53,166.67 annually. While this amount has remained stagnant, the costs associated with maintaining and expanding our facilities have increased dramatically over the past 27 years. Our fairgrounds are no longer just a venue for a weeklong county fair; they have evolved into a year-round community resource that supports a wide variety of activities and organizations, including:

- Hosting numerous organizations that rent our facilities for diverse events.
- Providing a space for 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) youth to develop essential agricultural and leadership skills.
- Supporting equestrian activities, including practice and competitions.
- Hosting a professional rodeo that brings in spectators from across the region.
- Serving as the home to the largest craft and vendor show in southern Oregon.
- Providing human and animal shelter during County emergencies; most notably the 2020 Almeda and Obenchain Fires.

Despite our best efforts to operate efficiently, the financial constraints caused by the outdated funding cap have made it increasingly difficult to maintain and improve our facilities. For many years, we barely break even, and in some years, we operate at a loss. Without increased funding, we risk losing the ability to provide these valuable services to our community.

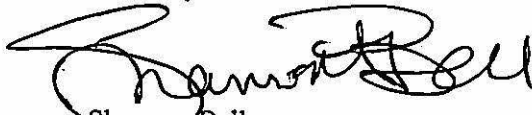
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Vice-Chair McLane
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SB 780 recognizes the evolving role of county fairgrounds and ensures that these community assets receive the financial support they need. Removing the cap on allocations will allow fairgrounds across Oregon to keep pace with rising costs, continue serving our communities, and provide opportunities for our youth to learn and grow.

I urge you to support SB 780 and advocate for its passage. Our fairgrounds are more than just event spaces; they are the heart of our community, fostering education, economic development, and cultural heritage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Shannon Bell
Senior Deputy County Administrator