

March 3, 2025

On behalf of Friends of the Multnomah County Fair, the all-volunteer group that operates our fair, I urge the legislature to pass HB2304 and HB2145.

Fairgrounds throughout Oregon not only host county and state fairs and other community events, they have become vital emergency centers at critical times. Fairgrounds have lodged people and animals multiple times in the devastating wildfire seasons of the past several years. The state fairgrounds and some counties hosted vaccination clinics during the early covid years.

Multnomah County is one of two fairs in the Oregon that receive no financial support from our county government. As a volunteer operated event, we provide a wonderful, culturally diverse event every spring on a budget of about \$75,000. Our youth development program provides numerous opportunities for kids ages 3 to 18 to develop and show their talents. Community booths allow groups to promote their free or low cost services available to area residents. Our fair boosts economic activity, providing local businesses and craftspeople with a venue to sell their products or services. While we do not currently own a fairgrounds, our venue, Oaks Amusement Park has expressed willingness to use part of their grounds as a staging area in the event of a local disaster.

Any additional funding secured by passage of the aforementioned house bills will ensure that we and the other fairs can continue to offer quality events and critical services to four communities. It would also help us in our goal to one day secure a permanent fairgrounds for Multnomah County.

With regards,

Larry Smith, President
Friends of the Multnomah County Fair