



March 4, 2025

Dear House Representatives

I am writing to express my strong support for Oregon House Bills 2304 and 2145. As the Chair of the Harney County Fair Board, I believe these legislative measures are essential for the continued success and growth of our county fair, agricultural programs, and community events. With depleted funding over the last 3 decades, our fairgrounds are lacking in adequate infrastructure, have aging facilities, and are in need of significant modernization.

The Harney County Fair Grounds are vital to our local economy and communities, providing unique opportunities for agricultural education, youth development, and cultural exchange. Our fair facilities support small businesses, highlight local agriculture, and create important spaces for people to come together. They are a center for emergency response, and it is critical to develop a safe haven in times of need. House Bills 2304 and 2145 would provide necessary resources and guidance that will help ensure our fairs can continue to thrive and meet the evolving needs of our communities. As the Harney County Fair grounds begins construction of the new Event Center, the funding from the lottery will help make this project a continued success for emergency preparedness and economic development.

Specifically, HB 2304 and 2145's provisions addressing removal of the cap on our 1% lottery funding, splitting 90% of proceeds to county fairgrounds will offer much-needed support for the operational sustainability of our fairgrounds. This will ensure that the resources available to the fair remain strong and the programs we offer are not only preserved but enhanced for future generations. As a board, we believe this bill will help foster our rural community.

I urge you and your colleagues to support the passage of these important pieces of legislation. They are critical of the continued success of Oregon's fairs and the many programs that benefit our youth and local communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the future of Oregon's fairs.

Sincerely,

Craig Neher
Chair, Harney County Fair Board