



411 NW Bridge- John Day, Or 97845, 541-575-1900

March 4, 2025

Dear Oregon Legislature,

I am writing you today to ask for you to support County & State Fair Investments for Emergency Preparedness through SB 780/HB 2304/HB 2136/HB 2145/HB 2527

We are asking for legislators to:

- Eliminate the cap established 20 years ago and fully fund 1% of lottery funds to county fairs, with 90% of funds going to county fairgrounds and 10% of funds going to the state fairgrounds.
- Support an additional \$20.839 million to the state fairgrounds for infrastructure improvements as a regional emergency and evacuee center
- Fund a study and additional capital project improvements to state and county fairgrounds to ensure they can continue as resilience/disaster response, economic, social, cultural, and educational hubs in our communities.
- Support an investment of \$2.5 million to the Union County Fairgrounds for health and safety infrastructure, including running water and sewer

In the past 10 years, our county fairgrounds and the state fair stepped up when our communities needed them the most. Through the global pandemic, wildfire relief efforts, and testing and vaccination efforts, our fairgrounds were transformed overnight into testing centers, makeshift hospitals, shelters for thousands of people and animals, and mass vaccination clinics.

Fairgrounds continue to act as hubs for emergency response and resilience efforts year-round and will continue to do so. Even though many fair grounds are badly in need of infrastructure and the ability to facilitate these emergencies.

In addition to emergency response centers, our fairgrounds are year-round economic hubs in our community. Each year:

- Fairgrounds host approximately 6 million people during annual fairs and over 17,000 local events, bringing business to local hotels, restaurants, retail establishments, and service providers.
- Over 600 non-profit groups used our fairgrounds to generate more than \$10 million in charitable donations. Fairgrounds hosted educational, cultural, agricultural, and economic events for all ages and continue to seek further inclusion of communities of color.
- Junior Livestock Auction receipts at fairs of over \$12 million go to fund educational scholarships for youth entering food production and agriculture education beyond high school.
- 10,000 volunteers dedicated over 200,000 hours of volunteer service at their local fairgrounds.
- Fairgrounds directly employed 479 workers with a payroll of over \$10 million

A recent economic study by Oregon State University estimated that fairgrounds generated an economic footprint of approximately \$52 million in output, \$28 million in value-added income, and 867 full- and part-time jobs.

I am asking you to please support SB 780/HB 2304/HB 2136/HB 2145/HB 2527 so fairs across the State of Oregon can continue to operate in a safe environment.

Sincerely,

Mindy K. Winegar

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Grant County Fair Grounds

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