



**Baker County Fair Board**  
2600 East Street  
Baker City, OR 97814

P 541-523-7881  
bakerfair@bakercounty.org

DATE: March 3, 2025  
TO: Oregon Legislators  
FROM: Baker County Fair Board  
Ron Rowan, Chairman; Dean Defrees; Vice Chairman; Cliff Schoeningh; Mike Sullivan;  
Kathleen Parker; Chris Stocks  
SUBJECT: Support For SB 780/HB 2304/HB 2136/HB 2145/HB 2527

---

The Baker County fairgrounds have been a staple location for community activities and events for over 100 years. Baker County is not alone. Fairgrounds around the state are a vital resource in the communities they serve, acting as testing centers, makeshift hospitals, emergency response centers, a shelter for thousands of people and animals as well as a local gathering place for community and regional activities.

Unfortunately, state and county fairgrounds infrastructure has not been able to meet the health and safety needs of communities when they need them the most. We are asking for your help by supporting this legislation. This is an "investment" in our Oregon communities. The return on the investment will be realized in many ways. 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.

Examples of how fairgrounds positively impact our communities:

- 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.
- 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.

Please support our fairgrounds by voting for this upcoming legislation that will help sustain the important role that fairgrounds play in our Oregon communities.

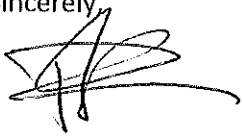
We are asking legislators to:

- 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 centers.
- Fund a study and additional capital project improvements to state and county fairgrounds to

ensure they can continue as resilience/disaster response centers, and 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ron Rowan', written over a horizontal line.

Ron Rowan, Baker County Fair Board Chairman