



March 1, 2025

Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Diehl and Vice-Chair Isadore and Members of the Committee –

ORLA supports County Fairs at the local level and we understand how these events can benefit local rural communities. We respectfully oppose HB 2171 because we do not believe it is a solution to benefit local fairground and event centers.

Below are a few examples of Fairground/fair support from the tourism industry and while this is not a comprehensive list, these are some good examples of how local communities work with the industry to meet their needs.

**Facilities Funding** - Benton County adopted a 3% county-wide TLT in 2019. The 70% designated for tourism is [intended to be used](#) for enhancements at the fairgrounds. Deschutes County passed a 1% increase to their unincorporated TLT in 2013. All of the 70% for tourism in that 1% is [directed toward fairground improvements](#).

**Travel Oregon Grants** - In 2021, Travel Oregon awarded the Tillamook County Fairgrounds a recovery grant to improve wayfinding signage, event information and safety messaging as they look to make fairground events meet public health and safety needs. In 2019, Travel Oregon awarded the Harney County fairgrounds \$20,000 to produce a Market and Feasibility Study to determine what events the fairgrounds can attract and what structural improvements can be implemented to best utilize the fairgrounds and drive visitation.

**Event Promotion** - Travel Oregon has had a special focus on promoting Heritage Traditions this year (a designation from the Historic Preservation Office for events 50+ yrs old)—these include the State Fair, the Clackamas County Fair, and the Wasco County Fair—the Wasco County Fair is included in a Heritage Highlight in the currently being printed 2025 Visitor Guide. The Travel Oregon [rodeo map and round up](#) also highlights a number of rodeos across the state taking place at county fairgrounds, like Columbia County and Lake County. In past years Travel Oregon has even attended Cowboy Christmas at the National Finals Rodeo to promote local rodeos in Oregon.

We understand how fairgrounds can be an important part of local communities. There is a process today that allows these partnerships to work at both the State and Local level. We also understand not all local governments are effectively using their local tourism dollars in a fashion that goes back into tourism facilities and promotion of events.

HB 2171 takes money out of the system and while we realize it may seem to be a small amount, there is a process in place for any community to benefit under the current system. We are constantly fighting local governments and advocacy groups from removing Transient Lodging Tax dollars at the State and Local level from the current system that promote events and economic

drivers around the state. We continue to wish Local Governments would work more collaboratively with their communities to build partnerships instead of trying to remove more money from the current system.

We ask you to join us in supporting local event centers, but HB 2171 is not an answer to that objective and we urge you to please not pass HB 2171.