

**To: Oregon House of Representatives
House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade**

**From: Gary Wertz, CEO
Yamhill County Fair & Event Center
2070 NE Lafayette Ave
McMinnville, Or 97128
503-434-7524
wertzg@yamhillcounty.gov**

Re: HB 2304, HB 2145

Committee Members,

**I would like to urge your support of HB 2304/HB2136/HB2145/HB2527.
These bills supporting fairgrounds across Oregon is sorely needed.**

For 171 years, Oregon's Oldest Fair is still serving the citizens of Yamhill County. It is the connection between Oregon's Pioneers and the future generations.

Like all other fairs/fairgrounds, we were there and serving during World Wars, global pandemics, social changes. We were the one constant that help the citizens through these challenges of those times. We provided relief efforts for the Wildfires, Pandemic response efforts, Education of youth and supporting the families of our citizens of the state.

There is a diverse use of these facilities. 4-H, FFA, Non-Profits, Cultural, Agricultural and Economic are a few of the uses that depend on the fairgrounds year after year.

We are the unknown economic generator for our county's. When Oregon State University performed a survey to see what the impact of the fairgrounds in the state were. Yamhill County Fair/fairgrounds provided a \$7.5 million dollar impact to the county. This survey was done in 2008. Seventeen years later we are in the process of reviewing the survey and would be surprised if it has not doubled.

The Yamhill County Fairgrounds has been in its location since 1946 when the county bought the U.S. Calvary Training Grounds it abandon in 1941. While some of the barns remained most of the buildings were built between 1946 to 1963. We have worked hard at keeping these buildings and infrastructure in repair, making a safe environment for the public to visit and use. As an unfunded mandate the rentals of the facilities are what maintains the structures. The older the buildings the greater the cost to repair them.

The support that these bills offer will go a long way in keeping fairgrounds a safe and current environment for all the uses that they are used for. They are the hub that keeps communities together. As you have learned from testimony that you have received, fairgrounds serve a variety uses to the communities they serve.

So, as you deliberate, please remember all that you have heard about the good that fairgrounds do, please vote to move these bills forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gary Wertz, CEO

Yamhill County Fair & Event Center