



HB 2404 Testimony

I have been working as a contract advertising, marketing, and public relations consultant with the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center (OSFEC) since 2013. Over this thirteen-year period I have become familiar with how valuable the 185-acre facility in Salem is to Oregonians. Besides hosting the State Fair and hundreds of events annually, the fairgrounds are the mid-Willamette Valley's most important facility:

- In March 2020, during the initial stages of the Corona virus pandemic, the Oregon Health Authority set-up its Oregon Medical Station in the Jackman-Long building. The overflow hospital, staffed by the Oregon National Guard, was organized to handle up to 250 patients, with the medical supplies and equipment needed to care for them.
- During the 2020 Santiam Canyon catastrophic wildfires, OSFEC was the primary evacuation facility for families, livestock, and pets. The Federal government based their hazardous waste clean-up operations at OSFEC.

When a crisis happens, residents head to the Oregon State Fair Grounds. Alarming, OSFEC is not included in the following emergency plans:

- [Salem Emergency Plan](#)
- [Marion County Emergency Operations Plan](#)
- [Oregon Disaster Recovery Plan](#)

These documents specifically outline plans for wildfires, pandemics, public health emergencies, floods, earthquakes, terror events, etc. Nowhere in any of these documents are the Fairgrounds mentioned or cited once. The lists of Critical Infrastructure do not include OSFEC.

Furthermore, the facility is outside of the 100-year floodplain and is not at high risk for liquefaction in an earthquake. Fault lines surround Salem and are throughout Marion County, but do not run near the Fairgrounds.

When the big earthquake happens, regardless of whether OSFEC is in the city, county, or state emergency plans, the facility will become an impromptu destination for emergency services and evacuees. It already happened during the wildfires and pandemic.



Decades of deferred maintenance have created liabilities within most of the OSFEC's outdated buildings, which are truly critical infrastructure during emergencies. Modernization is essential.

Please help OSFEC find funding to update this critical infrastructure to withstand an earthquake and serve vulnerable people in the Salem and the mid-Willamette Valley.

Thank you,

Royle Johnson