



# Clatsop County

## Board of Commissioners

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March 6, 2025

House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

### **RE: Support House Bill 2304 and House Bill 2145**

Chair Nguyen and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners and the Clatsop County Fair Board, we write to express our strong support for House Bill 2304 and House Bill 2145, which together provide critical investments to ensure county fairgrounds across Oregon continue to serve as economic drivers, community gathering spaces, and emergency response centers.

#### Economic and Community Importance of Fairgrounds

Fairgrounds, including the Clatsop County Fairgrounds, play an essential role in local economies by supporting small businesses, nonprofit fundraisers, and tourism. However, aging infrastructure, rising costs, and outdated funding constraints have made it increasingly difficult for fairgrounds to meet growing community needs. Both HB 2304 and HB 2145 address these challenges by removing the outdated \$1.53 million cap on lottery allocations, ensuring a consistent and inflation-adjusted revenue stream that will allow fairgrounds to maintain operations, modernize facilities, and expand programming.

#### Addressing Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness Needs

Infrastructure investment is particularly critical, as fairgrounds statewide face deteriorating buildings, outdated utilities, and limited capacity for expansion. These issues not only impact event operations but also weaken fairgrounds' ability to serve as emergency shelters and disaster response centers. HB 2304 and HB 2145 work in tandem to address these concerns by directing the Oregon Business Development Department to develop five- and ten-year master plans for capital improvements, ensuring strategic and long-term investment in fairground infrastructure.

#### Financial Strains and Rising Costs

These bills also recognize the increasing financial strain on fairgrounds due to inflation, post-pandemic recovery costs, and rising operational expenses. From insurance and utilities to staffing and equipment, the costs of maintaining fairgrounds continue to rise. The additional funding provided under these bills will allow fairgrounds to remain financially sustainable while also supporting the many vendors, carnival operators, and service providers who rely on these facilities for their livelihoods.

The Need for Immediate Action

Both bills declare an emergency, making it effective immediately upon passage. Because fairgrounds serve such a vital role in both economic development and emergency preparedness, immediate action is necessary. By declaring an emergency, these bills allow for the rapid implementation of funding and planning measures that will ensure fairgrounds remain viable community assets for generations to come.

**For these reasons, we strongly urge your YES vote on HB 2304 and HB 2145.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala  
Chair, Clatsop County Board of Commissioners  
District 1



Anthony Huacuja  
Commissioner, Clatsop County Board of Commissioners  
District 2



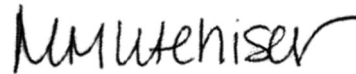
Pamela Wev  
Commissioner, Clatsop County Board of Commissioners  
District 3



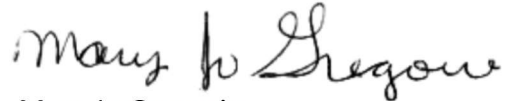
Courtney Bangs  
Vice Chair, Clatsop County Board of Commissioners  
District 4



Lianne Thompson  
Commissioner, Clatsop County Board of Commissioners  
District 5



Mallory Litehiser  
Chair, Clatsop County Fair Board



Mary Jo Gregorie  
Vice Chair, Clatsop County Fair Board