



# UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*Paul Anderes, Commissioner*  
*R. Matthew Scarfo, Commissioner*  
*Jake Seavert, Commissioner*

*Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer*

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January 31, 2025

**RE: HB 2527 – Critical Infrastructure Needs at Union County Fairgrounds Resiliency Hub**

I have engaged with the state legislature numerous times over the past several years, seeking assistance and funding to upgrade the sanitary facilities at the Union County Fairgrounds. The current septic system is unsustainable, resulting in the absence of flushing toilets. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has been involved with this project since the beginning, and replacing the septic system is not an option. Our only feasible solution is to connect to the City of La Grande's water and sewer system; however, the Grande Ronde River and Interstate 84 present significant challenges, complicating our funding efforts.

The Union County Fairgrounds have recently been designated as a resiliency hub in partnership with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM). These hubs are established in every county to serve as points of distribution for supplies, temporary evacuation centers, and emergency shelters during wildfires, winter power outages, and other emergencies. As critical infrastructure, these hubs play a vital role in our community's safety and resilience. Both FEMA and the State of Oregon have prioritized enhancing local resiliency in response to recent disasters.

To address the infrastructure challenges, our options are to either tunnel under the Grande Ronde River or bridge over Interstate 84. When we first sought funding in 2019, the project was estimated to cost \$700,000. However, due to inflation and rising construction costs, the current estimate has surged to approximately \$4.35 million, covering only the essential components. Despite persistent efforts to secure funding through state and federal channels, we have only managed to secure smaller amounts from various sources.


We are concerned that further delays could result in even higher costs. For a detailed breakdown of the current costs for the Union County Fairgrounds Wastewater Project, please refer to the attached document.

The county fairgrounds are a vital resource for our community and will now serve as a designated resiliency hub. In addition to hosting the annual county fair, the fairgrounds will be a critical venue for emergency support, educational programs, and conferences, further enhancing its role in safeguarding and strengthening our community during times of crisis.

I would greatly appreciate your support of **HB 2527**. **The House Bill provides the \$2.5 million that is necessary to complete the critical infrastructure needs at the Union County Fairgrounds Resiliency Hub.**

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

  
R. Matthew Scarfo  
Union County Commissioner

**HB2527**  
**Union County Fairgrounds**  
**Wastewater Project -**

**Estimated Project Cost (2025)** **\$ 4,352,777**

**Project Summary**

Design Engineering (complete)	\$ 135,474	
Construction Administration (estimate)	\$ 84,880	
Construction	\$ 3,378,070	
10% Construction Contingency	\$ 337,008	
La Grande Public Works (estimate)	\$ 363,950	
Additional Project Contingency	\$ 53,395	
		<b>\$ (4,352,777)</b>

**Secured Funding:**

HB 5006 Business Oregon Capital Improvements for Fairgrounds (2021)	\$ (277,777)
HB 5202 Christmas Tree Bill (2022)	\$ (1,000,000)
Northwest Farm Credit Donation	\$ (75,000)
Union County Contribution (ARPA Funding)	\$ (250,000)

**Future Anticipated Funding:**

City of La Grande Contribution	\$ (250,000)
Oregon Legislature	\$ (2,500,000)

**Remaining Balance:** **\$0.00**

