



**Comments before the
Senate Rural Communities and Economic Development Committee
Senate Bill 7 (Oregon State Fair)
By Jeff Stone, Executive Director
Oregon Association of Nurseries
April 2, 2013**

Chairman Roblan, Vice Chair Baertschiger, members of the committee, my name is Jeff Stone and I serve as the Executive Director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries. The OAN is pleased to support Senate Bill 7, legislation to transfer the state fair and exposition center from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to a public corporation

The economic footprint of the nursery and greenhouse industry

Nursery association members represent wholesale and Christmas tree growers, retailers and greenhouse operations. Our members have spent generations as stewards of the state's natural resources. The nursery and greenhouse industry remains the state's largest agricultural sector despite a severe economic downturn. As the nation's second largest nursery state with over \$744 million in sales, our growers ship their products throughout the country.

The Oregon State Fair is a showcase for Oregon's agricultural history

OAN believes the Oregon State Fair is an important part of Oregon's agricultural heritage and community, as it has been for nearly 150 years. The Oregon State Fair's primary purpose is to showcase Oregon products, educate the public on the tremendous industries we have in the state – especially agriculture and forestry. Every farm family has a story about the Oregon State Fair and the nursery and greenhouse industry has a strong connection to this community event.

The State Fair's status as a public corporation would allow the Fair to have the necessary flexibility to operate like a business and make decisions independent of the state's two-year budget and legislative cycle. OAN also believes this would provide administrative relief to the Parks and Recreation Department, which is more suited to serving patrons of the parks system.