



**Comments before the Senate Committee on Rural and Economic Development  
Senate Bill 7 – 2 Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center  
By Debbie McCune, Director of Sales  
Travel Salem  
April 2, 2013**

Chair Roblan and members of the committee, I am Debbie McCune, Director of Sales for Travel Salem, the destination marketing organization for Salem, OR and Marion and Polk Counties. I am pleased to offer support for Senate Bill 7 with the - 2 amendment.

I have worked with the Oregon State Fair and Expo Center (OSFEC) for 20 years, the past 15 of which in my position at Travel Salem marketing the Salem area as a destination for conventions and events. The OSFEC is a major piece of the inventory that we have to offer here in the region. The ability to offer a location that can accommodate thousands of visitors and generate millions of dollars in economic impact to our local economy is extremely important to the Salem area.

I am currently working with several events that will bring thousands of attendees to Salem because of the OSFEC venue. Groups like the BMW Motorcycle Owners Association whose 2013 Rally will be at the OSFEC this July and will bring in 6,000 to 7,000 people who will spend many days exploring our region. Another example is the Jehovah's Witness Conventions that bring 5,000 attendees three times each summer to Salem and has for the past five years. There is no other venue in our region that can accommodate events of this size and generate this type of economic impact.

I believe that SB 7 – 2 will lead to the economic sustainability of the OSFEC. The key provisions of the bill will improve the financial efficiency of the OSFEC and result over time in a better bottom line. The ability of the OSFEC to be more flexible, timely and efficient when contracting with vendors will in turn improve the experience of the groups we bring to OSFEC and Salem.

We currently are booking events at OSFEC three to five years out in the future. The groups with which I am currently working need to know that the OSFEC will be a thriving, financially sustainable venue five years from now. Today's uncertainty about the OSFEC does not build confidence with potential clients.

I ask for your support of SB 7 – 2 so that we may continue to have this important venue available in the years to come.