

From: [Kim Larson](#)
To: [HWREC Exhibits](#)
Subject: Regarding the Oregon Wildfires
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:44:28 PM

To the representatives of the Oregon Legislature:

I was contacting you all regarding a very important issue that has once again come to my attention. After the wildfires swept through our communities, I volunteered many, many hours at the Washington County fairgrounds to help evacuees with their horses, livestock, and other animals. These fairgrounds and all the fairgrounds in our communities are always there in our times of need and serve as command centers for agencies like FEMA, office of emergency services, law enforcement, etc. I found out from the manager of the Washington county fairgrounds that we are drastically cutting the agricultural side of the fairgrounds and it is apparent that the state of the current buildings are so rundown and pose a giant health and safety risk. Despite cutting back on the space for livestock in the new plans for the fairgrounds, these grounds are vital to our communities and I continue to see them stepping up in our time of need, yet there is nothing being done to assist them to get the funding they need to maintain, rebuild, and run these facilities. There have been a few meetings to address the future of the Washington County fairgrounds and planning for what the future of the space could and should turn into, but there is no funding to make these plans happen, nor is there any budget for them. Because they are a government run entity, they cannot take donations and getting funding or a budget set up through the county has been greatly overlooked despite trying to bring this to the attention of our county commissioners. Many of the commissioners only think of the fairgrounds during fair season and then use their county budget towards other things deemed more important.

My deep concern comes from the fact that without these grounds available to us during evacuations and disasters, the many, many people who own livestock and make their living through agriculture businesses and people like me who have horses and are a part of the equestrian community would be at a total loss during a natural disaster. Our land was lucky enough to avoid the wildfires this time, though one was burning within 8 miles of our farm. I helped evacuate two large horse facilities (over 60 horses) in the Canby area and both of these barns, as well as many, many others I know used the fairgrounds as a safe landing place during these very stressful and scary times. And these grounds don't just serve livestock owners, but they also serve their communities, offering shelter for the homeless during the COVID pandemic and allowing a safe place to stay for evacuees from other surrounding areas that had to leave their homes. I never had dreamed that our beautiful land would erupt in flames and burn our communities down to ashes, but with the continued effects of global warming, I'm deeply afraid that these fires are going to be a new normal for us, like our Californian neighbors. My father was a huge advocate for emergency planning before he passed two years ago and he always would stress to me that the Cascadia earthquake is still very overdue. With both fire and earthquake natural disasters looming on the horizon, and considering our current power outages from the snow and ice storms, I would love to see some action on the state and

national level to have our local fairgrounds (and fairgrounds all across the nation) funded so they can continue to be there supporting their communities in our times of need. Without these grounds as resources, so many people I know would be unable to get both themselves and their animals to safety. Please consider this as we are going into a new year. I trust you all to hold the values of our community close, as you have fought against corruption and stood for equal rights and fairness. I want you to think about the future of these people you've fought so hard for. Please help give us the resources we need to manage our emergency preparedness so that we too can be there to protect and support Oregonians in their time of need.

Thank you for your time,

Kim Larson-Daiker