



SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 3173

We, the Klamath County Fair Board, are writing in support of House Bill 3173, which is written in support of Oregon Fairs and facilities, providing the opportunity to maintain current facilities as well as update old dilapidated facilities.

History and data show that our Oregon fairgrounds are an economic hub in each of our communities. Most recently in 2019:

- Fairgrounds hosted 6.15 million people during annual fairs and over 17,000 local events, bringing business to local hotels, restaurants, retail establishments, and service providers.
- Over 600 non-profit groups used our fairgrounds to generate more than \$10 million in charitable donations.
- 10,000 volunteers dedicated over 200,000 hours of volunteer service at their local fairgrounds.
- Fairgrounds directly employed 479 workers with a payroll of over \$10 million

A recent economic study by Oregon State University estimated that fairgrounds generated an economic footprint of approximately \$52 million in output, \$28 million in value-added income, and 867 full-and part-time jobs.

During 2020, youth education events, cultural festivals, trade shows and expositions, equestrian events, craft & hobby shows, consumer shows, non-profit fundraisers, and community social events were almost all cancelled. This left counties and their fairgrounds financially strapped and ineligible for most federal COVID relief funding. The fallout from this pandemic also resulted in many individuals being laid off from full-time jobs – in turn effecting each of our own local economies.

We feel that it is imperative to note that the Klamath County Fairgrounds and Event Center is a self-supporting entity. We do not pull from the County's General Fund but rely solely on rental income, a portion of the county's lodging tax income, an allotment from the Oregon State Lottery fund, our local Fair's income, a bi-annual equipment auction, small grant opportunities, and small donations from supporters within our boundaries.

HB 3173 will eliminate an old funding cap put in place years ago and provide an additional investment of approximately \$165,000 per county per year. The bill also funds a much-needed capital infrastructure study so that we can make sure fairgrounds are ready for events and more importantly, emergency disaster response.

Klamath County Fairgrounds and Event Center has begun the Master Planning process; however, with funding at issue, this endeavor will be difficult to complete. As a matter of fact, as soon as the pandemic became a real issue, this activity was halted to ensure our financial security. As our facility grows older, attention is needed to repair, replace and grow to accommodate our current and desired event needs in the future – as well as ensuring the safety for our many guests and customers.

We appreciate your consideration with regard to this House Bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Derrick Rowley".

Derrick Rowley, Fairgrounds and Event Center Manager
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