



Josephine County Fairgrounds & Event Center

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March 25, 2021

State of Oregon Legislature
Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support of House Bill 3173

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing today to urge you to support House Bill 3173 to continue much needed funding for Fairgrounds throughout the State. Josephine County, like many others, found themselves supporting their County through this unprecedented year with fire evacuations that devastated areas of Southern Oregon, impromptu vaccination clinics and even temporary support for the operation of local Courts. We were reminded that when so many were fleeing their homes, that the first place they run to for shelter, support and information is their local Fairgrounds.

Like many others in our great state, our Fairgrounds is not supported by the County's general fund and we were financially devastated by the COVID restrictions and regulations. We have seen cancellations of our Fair, youth education events, festivals, trade shows, equestrian events, craft & hobby shows, consumer shows, non-profit fundraisers, and community social events for the last 12 months and continuing. This has left our Fairgrounds financially strapped and being a government department ineligible for most COVID relief funding.

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. This bill also funds a much-needed capital infrastructure study so that we can make sure Fairgrounds are ready to serve our community in whatever the future holds.

Fairgrounds are so much more than just a County Fair! They are a piece of our community's history, a source of education for our youth, a platform for our local entrepreneurs, tourism drivers, and the go-to resource in times of emergency. Josephine County needs your help, and we urge you to support our Fairgrounds by supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

Tamra Martin
Director