

Submitter: JL Wilson

On Behalf Of: Oregon Fairs Association

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB2911

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Fairs Association (OFA) strongly supports HB 2911 and thanks Rep Gomberg and his coalition for their attention to this issue.

As you likely know, county fairgrounds are 'enterprise organizations.' That is, although they are publicly owned properties & facilities, they are largely responsible for generating their own revenues through their fair and expo business.

Starting with the 2020 fair season, Oregon's county fairgrounds were shut down over the course of a year due to the COVID pandemic. County fairs were cancelled. Expo business was cancelled. There was no ability for a fairgrounds to generate revenue, yet the public demands placed on county fairgrounds intensified, particularly during the 2020 fire season.

Many of the grant programs established to assist venues and cultural organizations in dealing with the financial impacts of the COVID epidemic were of little value to fairgrounds, primarily because these programs were not available to publicly-owned facilities.

HB 2911 rectifies this problem. It's an acknowledgment that county fairgrounds suffered significant financial loss from which some haven't recovered. We are grateful that fairgrounds are specifically called out in HB 2911 to receive grant funding.

Oregon Fairs Association (OFA) supports HB 2911 and respectfully requests that the committee approve the bill.