



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
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DATE: February 8, 2023
TO: House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: HB 2510, relating to county fairs

Dear Chair Bynum, Co-Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, and Members of the Committee:

Lane County has examined HB 2510 and urges the Committee to support this measure. The bill eliminates a funding cap put in place years ago, ensuring instead that County Fairs will receive one percent of total lottery funding. While lottery funding ebbs and flows depending on a variety of factors, we expect this measure will provide an additional \$165,000 per county per year dedicated to county fairs. The bill also funds a much-needed and state wide capital infrastructure study so that we can make sure fairgrounds are able to adequately plan for future community needs. In Lane County, that will very likely involve continuing to develop the fairgrounds as a central site for disaster response and emergency sheltering.

The Lane County Fairgrounds is centrally located in Eugene and is returning to normal, year-round programming. In addition to those events, it also serves as a key operations center during emergencies or disasters. The Fairgrounds have been highly functional during the past two fire seasons. Federal forest logistical centers were located at the Fairgrounds, as was the Multi Agency Response Center after the Holiday Farm Fire, and it was where we triaged residents from Oakridge when we had to fully evacuate that community due to the Cedar Creek Fire. It also serves as an emergency shelter for large animals displaced by fire events, and is currently receiving upgrades so that it can serve as a clean air shelter during dangerous air quality events. The County's Public Health Authority used it for community vaccination events, COVID-19 testing, and continue to use it as a warming site for our community members who are houseless during extremely cold winter nights.

A recent market analysis showed the fairgrounds economic impact each year provides over \$35 million to Lane County communities and businesses. We provide a safe space and venue for businesses, organizations, youth groups, and non-profits to gather for entertainment or business and HB 2510 will enable us to do so for years into the future.

HB 2510 will additionally help every Fairground identify the most pressing deferred maintenance and improvement needs. Many facilities are not up to current code, many are not ADA friendly or compliant and most were not built with the intent to provide emergency shelter or housing. HB 2510 will ensure that Fairgrounds get the planning resources they need, and will boost annual operational supports such that these facilities remain functional for community members and visitors alike.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER