



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

March 23, 2023

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Representative Dacia Grayber, Chair
Representative Rick Lewis, Vice-Chair
Representative Thuy Tran, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Colm Willis, Chair
Kevin Cameron
Danielle Bethell

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Jan Fritz

RE: Marion County Supports HB 2948

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Tran, and Members of the Committee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners support House Bill 2948, which will direct the Oregon Department of Emergency Management to develop and implement a program to award grants for fairgrounds used as emergency evacuation sites. HB 2948 will update and modernize fairgrounds, so they are prepared to help Oregonians during times of disaster.

In 2020, wildfire ravaged communities throughout the Santiam Canyon. The fire spread so quickly, it gave residents little or no time to plan their evacuation. Marion County partnered with the State Fairgrounds to open their facilities as an emergency evacuation site. This gave impacted wildfire survivors a place to go during their time of need and despair.

In the following days, the Oregon State Fairgrounds became the center of emergency management and relief. Beds were set up in the Jackman Long building to house wildfire survivors who lost their homes. The fairground stables were used to shelter horses, dogs, pigs, and goats. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) utilized the fairground parking lots to set up their headquarters and response teams. The American Red Cross set up tables of donations for wildfire survivors in need of clothing, food, hygiene items, and other daily essentials.

Over the past several years, the state fairgrounds have been used during times of disaster and Marion County will continue to rely on this local asset as needed for emergency response, refuge, and relief. House Bill 2948 is an investment in fairgrounds across the state. City, county, and state emergency managers depend on these facilities when they are responding to wildfires, floods, earthquakes, or any other disaster Oregonians may face.

BOC: AMK

The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges the committee to votes yes on HB 2948.
Thank you for continued work to support our communities.

Sincerely,



Colm Willis
Chair



Kevin Cameron
Commissioner



Danielle Bethell
Commissioner