

Submitter: Kelly Walther
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

RE: SB894 Oregon State Fair and Expo Center–Regional Emergency and Evacuee Center.

When the fires ravaged the canyon in 2020, thousands of people and livestock sought refuge at the fairgrounds. NO ONE TOLD THEM TO COME. NO ONE INVITED THEM. It was a natural instinct that brought them to safety. OSFEC staff and volunteers worked miracles to become a clearing center for food, clothing, and animal feed. It was a place to sleep for exhausted people escaping from the fire in RVs. It was a refuge.

It also became painfully clear that the site needs improvements before the next disaster sends people running to the fairgrounds. Communication and safety need to be addressed.

We know they will come...because they did. It would be negligent not to prepare.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly Walther
Grant Services of America, Inc.
OSFEC Funding Consultant (2021-current)
Former Oregon State Fair Foundation Board of Directors (2016-2021)
Former Oregon Fairs Association Board of Directors (2008-2010)
Former Marion County Fair Board of Directors and Chair (2001-2010)