

Written Testimony in Support of Appropriating Funds for Water & Sewer Improvements at the Union County Fairgrounds

Submitted by: Kimberly Becker Gunderson
Friends of the Union County Fair Foundation, President

To: The Members of the Economic Development, Small Business & Trade Committee:

I am writing to you as a 3rd Generation Union County resident, former 4-H and FFA member, current 4-H leader, and a parent of a child who shows livestock at the Union County Fair. I would like to express my strong support for House Bill 2527 and the essential funding it proposes for water and sewer system improvements at the Union County Fairgrounds.

One of the most pressing concerns at the fairgrounds is the outdated, non-functioning sewer system, which leads to the reliance on porta-potties for restroom facilities during the fair. As a parent, 4-H leader, and active member of this community, I am particularly concerned for those with accessibility challenges. The current porta-potties do not provide the necessary accommodations for individuals with mobility impairments or other disabilities.

Beyond the fair itself, the Union County Fairgrounds are used for a variety of other important community events throughout the year, such as agricultural shows, public festivals, weddings, reunions, memorials and youth programs like 4-H and FFA. The fairgrounds also serve as an essential community resource during emergencies, providing shelter in the event of natural disasters or other crises. During emergencies, we rely on the fairgrounds to provide a safe and central location for shelter, but the current lack of functioning plumbing and accessible restroom facilities poses a serious challenge.

The Union County Fairgrounds is an integral part of our community—a place that represents the heart of our agricultural roots. It is where our youth, families, farmers, and ranchers come together to celebrate our agricultural heritage, showcase livestock, textiles, home baked goods and participate in events that connect us all. Our fairgrounds are truly something our community should be proud of as a central hub for education and tradition.

I showed livestock and participated in home economics at the fair growing up, and without the fair, I wouldn't be the person I am today. Those experiences taught me the values of hard work, responsibility, and community service. They shaped me into the successful, community-minded adult I am now, and I am deeply committed to ensuring that future generations have the same opportunity to grow and learn at the fair.

I urge you to support House Bill 2527 and provide the necessary funding to modernize the sewer system and install accessible, flushable restroom facilities. These improvements will create a healthier, safer, and more it will ensure that our fairgrounds will stay operating for many years to come.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I appreciate your support in ensuring the continued success of our fairgrounds and for the inclusion of all members of our rural community.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Becker Gunderson
Friends of the Union County Fair Foundation, President