



March 10, 2025

House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business, and Trade

Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chairs Bynum and Diehl,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2527. This bill will distribute funds to the Union County Fair Association for water and sewer improvements to the Union County Fairgrounds in La Grande, Oregon. The Union County Fairgrounds has the capacity to significantly bolster our County's effective response in an emergency. It plays a critical role in our Emergency Preparedness and Response infrastructure but unfortunately, we have been unable to include the Fairgrounds in many of our planning or response efforts due to its lack of water and sewer.

In the testimony provided to the committee on March 10, 2025 by Union County Emergency Manager Nick Vora you heard that the Union County Fairgrounds was used extensively during our County's COVID-19 response. We even garnered some attention because "It's not every day you get your vaccine in a livestock barn."<sup>1</sup> You need the right facility to vaccinate or test or provide prophylaxis to a large number of people quickly and efficiently during an outbreak or emergency. The Union County Fairgrounds is almost perfect: it is immediately available, it has large buildings that are cool or warm depending on the season, it has tons of parking, and can be adapted for different uses. I say ALMOST perfect because it's missing one thing that is absolutely essential for these uses: sinks where people can wash their hands and accessible restroom facilities.

Last week at our Emergency Preparedness Coalition meeting we discussed emergency evacuation options for long-term care facilities that serve populations who are an important focus of public health's planning and response efforts. Every time we discuss evacuation plans, the Union County Fairgrounds comes up as a potential location for short- and long-term sheltering. And every time we are reminded that this is a perfect location for sheltering in every way except for one: there are no sinks for handwashing and no accessible restroom facilities.

I can think of many other ways the Fairgrounds could be used to benefit the citizens of Union County as it relates to public health and other emergencies if we could get this one piece in place. I could also share more about the many public health benefits the Fairgrounds offer Union County and its residents. Reva Hartenstein's testimony in front of the committee on March 10, 2025 touched on the protective factors Fairs offer for communities like ours, and the testimony you've heard and read just scratches the surface of the ways this essential investment will benefit Oregonians. Your support of HB 2527 will make this happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carrie Brogoitti', written in a cursive style.

Carrie Brogoitti  
Director of Public Health, Center for Human Development Union County

<sup>1</sup> [https://covidblog.oregon.gov/vaccine-voices-its-not-every-day-you-get-your-vaccine-in-a-livestock-barn/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://covidblog.oregon.gov/vaccine-voices-its-not-every-day-you-get-your-vaccine-in-a-livestock-barn/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)