

Submitter: Kathy Gover Shaw

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2527

The Union County Fairgrounds has been a huge part of my life since I started 4-H in the fourth grade. I am now, five decades later, the manager of the Union County Fairgrounds. I grew up and also now live two blocks away from the fairgrounds and am very aware of the impact it has on our community. Of course the fairgrounds is used year round by 4H and FFA clubs for meetings and training. The fairgrounds is also used year round for many other activities including class reunions, weddings, celebrations of life, proms, family reunions, church celebrations, birthday parties, graduation parties, fundraisers, car shows, drive-through Covid vaccination sites, evacuation site, overnight, stalling of livestock when the freeway is closed, company, picnics, retreats, music concerts and so many more! All of these events have to have portable toilets in order to use our facilities. Right now I am limited on the group I can promote our location to for rental due to our lack of an adequate waste water system. In 2023 and 2024 we had over 30 events. Our potential is to have something going every weekend and during the week. This would bring in much more tourism to our county and additional dollars to our businesses.

We also have a 14 space RV park with almost unlimited dry camping. When offering this type of overnight accommodations, it is common to have showers and restrooms available for travelers. When the weather is nice, we do have a porta potty available, but we do not have any showers. This reduces our ability to bring in overnight campers. We are located at the base of Mount Emily and the Mount Emily recreation area. We are a prime location for campers using this recreational area if we had better services.

We do have a caretaker who lives on site and has a very old septic system. We have had to put a lot of money into that system to keep it going. It is on its last leg! When that septic system goes out, we do not have another option to keep the on site caretaker.

Many people question why we cannot put in new septic systems. The problem there is our fairgrounds is actually lower than the river that goes next to it and the water table is too high to allow for a new septic system. We have evaluated all of the options and this is the solution that was presented by the experts.

The waste water problem at Union County is a problem that has been talked about for decades and right now we have the most momentum we have ever had behind this project. We need to keep moving forward. We need the Oregon legislation to support this bill and help us make this project happen! I beg you to support this bill and help us financially complete this project. Thank you! Kathy Gover-Shaw