DATE

Representative Jared Huffman

1527 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 7745 Protecting Fairs During Coronavirus Act

Dear Representative Huffman

As a private citizen and community member of Trinity County I write to urge your support for the Fairs Network as you deliberate consider relief packages in the upcoming weeks.

The Western Fairs Association is calling all communities to support the Network of Fairs.

On July 23, 2020 Representative Josh Harder (D-CA-10) introduced the **Protecting Fairs During Coronavirus Act (H.R. 7745)** in response to concerns from county and state fair leaders. The bill would create a new emergency grant program to help offset the massive revenue losses our fairs are experiencing because of health care measures taken to combat the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The **Protecting Fairs During Coronavirus Act** would establish a $5 billion federal grant program to offset fair revenue losses during the Coronavirus Pandemic. The fund would be available for both 2020 as well as 2021. States could apply for aid from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and then distribute the funds to fairs in their state.

“The Western Fairs Association, the California Fairs Alliance, and our Service Member partners are in strong support of Representative Josh Harder’s efforts to include the fair industry in Congressional legislation to assist during this time of National Emergency,” **said Sarah Cummings, President & CEO of the Western Fairs Association.** “Fairgrounds are an essential part of the infrastructure necessary for state and local communities to effectively respond in natural disasters and emergencies.  More importantly, fairgrounds are often the heartbeat of their communities, generating multi-millions of dollars in non-profit and community benefits, promoting agriculture and a quality of life serving as gathering spots, recreation facilities and learning centers.  Now is the time to provide emergency funding and preserve the legacy of the state’s Fairgrounds for future generations to come.”

Fairgrounds are often the heartbeats of our communities, acting as a gathering place in good times and in times of crisis, and generating billions of dollars in economic impact. However, Fairgrounds are funded solely by the revenue that they generate from the annual fairs, and other large-scale events, which are now prohibited due to Covid-19. Many Fairgrounds are now facing an uncertain future. We need Emergency Funding in the new package of Federal economic relief. Without support, many Fairs will close and the communities they serve will suffer.

To date as a result of the response to Covid-19, most fairs have canceled, postponed, or drastically altered the annual fair, and more are expected to make that decision in the coming weeks. Educational,  entertainment,  and family events that are important to the communities they serve,  like weddings,  family reunions,  seasonal trade shows,  equestrian events,  dog shows unicameral,  stand down events for veterans,  non-profit organization fundraisers,  learning center activities,  and  other community events have also been canceled,  postponed,  or closed.   The financial hardship is not only felt by our fairs and employees but also by our service members and all the local businesses that rely on our Fairgrounds and the Network of Fairs to survive.

In addition, Fairgrounds are an essential part of the infrastructure necessary for the state and federal governments to effectively respond to natural disasters and emergencies. Fairgrounds are often utilized during natural disasters. They serve as command centers for the Office of Emergency Services, Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, and FEMA. Fairgrounds serve as hospitals, homeless shelters, warming and cooling centers, and drive-thru testing facilities. Fairgrounds are a community lifeline during earthquakes, floods, and wildfires and provide essential shelters for rescued animals, including large animals and livestock which are difficult to house elsewhere.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, many Fairgrounds have or are currently serving as coronavirus testing centers, command centers for the Office of Emergency Services, or homeless shelters to help the effort to deal with the myriad of issues resulting from the pandemic.   Fairgrounds are self-funded and receive no revenue for these services. Most fairgrounds rely on event revenues to operate and do not receive assistance from the state or national government. With the postponement or cancellation of all events over the past months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, fairgrounds’ revenue streams have been severely depleted. Returning to “normal” could be months away or longer, which means that mass gatherings like sporting events, fairs, or concerts aren’t going to happen any time soon.   Fairgrounds are self-funded and the aforementioned governmental actions will put all Fairgrounds in jeopardy.

We respectfully request your help during these unprecedented challenging times by calling on Congress to support legislation like the **Protecting Fairs During Coronavirus Act** and others that support the Network of Fairs. Without this level of support, many fairgrounds will be forced to close.

Fairgrounds have always been there to add to the quality of life and assist the citizens of this great nation. We are very optimistic about the future of fairs and the strength of the Network and its partners. Now is the time to provide funding and preserve the legacy of the nation’s Fairgrounds for future generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support,

NAME

ADDRESS

CC: Western Fairs Association

Date

The Honorable Jared Huffman

Rm. #1527 Longworth House Office Building

United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for H.R. 7883, the Agricultural Fairs Rescue Act

Dear Representative Huffman:

COVID-19 has impacted industries across the U.S. and the fair industry has not been spared. Fairs across the country have had no choice but to cancel their annual events. These annual events provide important stimuli to the local, regional, and state economies. In addition, fairs provide millions of dollars in scholarships to youth around the country.

Despite the recent setbacks, fairs have offered their grounds for a wide array of community services including COVID-19 testing, blood drives, and drive-thru markets. This is not unusual for fairs, as they are a reflection of the community and help when called upon.

*(Add how COVID-19 has affected you personally and Trinity County Fair Association here.)*

The Agricultural Fairs Rescue Act (H.R. 7883), a bi-partisan legislation, would provide grant funding to rescue fair organizations:

* This bill provides $500 million in Agricultural Fair Rescue Grants to agricultural fairs, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
* AMS will provide the grant funding to states or state departments of agriculture based on the loss of attendance those fairs have experienced in 2020 when compared to 2019.
* The states or state department will then be required to make grants to fairs, prioritizing those that have faced the greatest financial hardship.
* Grants must be used to assist fairs to continue events that are drivers and promoters of agribusiness.
* Eligible fairs are local, county, or state fairs that help farmers promote their products or expand agricultural markets through conservation programs, agricultural research, educational programs, or other events that encourage agriculture, horticulture, and the domestic arts.

To become a co-sponsor of H.R. 7883, you may contact Mark Dennin in Congressman Jimmy Panetta’s office at mark.dennin@mail.house.gov or Ben Elleson in Congressman Billy Long’s office at ben.elleson@mail.house.gov.

Thank you for your continued support,

Your Name & Address