



**El Dorado County Fair & Event Center** *a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization*  
100 Placerville Drive, Placerville CA 95667

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May 8, 2020

The Honorable Kevin Kiley  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Frank Bigelow  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Brian Dahle  
California State Senate  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Emergency Funding for the California Fairs Network

Dear Assembly Members Kiley, Bigelow and Senator Dahle

As a fan of the El Dorado County Fair, I write to urge your support for the Network of California Fairs as you deliberate the state budget in the upcoming weeks.

As you are aware, Governor Newsom issued a statewide stay-at-home order and social distancing policies in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Most recently on April 14 the governor announced six key indicators that will guide decisions as to how California will lift the stay-at-home order and reopen the economy. Newsom also stated during his daily press briefing that there would be no large-scale events until there is a vaccine and/or herd immunity. This 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 California Fairgrounds in jeopardy.

Ours is one of 76 Fairgrounds representing all 58 counties in the state serving more than 35 million Californians that visited fairgrounds last year. Fairgrounds are often the heartbeat of their community generating over \$35 million in non-profit and community benefits, and promoting a quality of life serving as gathering spots, recreation facilities, and learning centers. Fairgrounds preserve 30,000 jobs and generate more than \$3.5 billion in annual economic impact while contributing over \$200 million in tax revenue to local and state government.

In addition, Fairgrounds are an essential part of the infrastructure necessary for the state to effectively respond in natural disasters and emergencies. During wildfires, Fairgrounds stage emergency vehicles and fire equipment, shelter displaced residents and animals and generally support the community efforts to cope with each emergency. As an example, several Fairgrounds are currently serving as coronavirus testing centers, command centers for the Office of Emergency Services, or homeless shelters to help the state's effort to deal

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*El Dorado County Fair & Event Center is dedicated to maintaining a vital year-round facility  
benefiting the people of El Dorado County.*



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with the myriad of issues resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. California Fairgrounds receive no revenue for providing these necessary services.

To date as a result of the stay-at-home order and response to Covid-19, more than 26 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, quinceañeras, stand down events for veterans, non-profit organization fundraisers, **(our local Fairgrounds is where almost \$2,000,000 annually is raised by non-profits for our community, which assists local government in helping the less fortunate)** learning center activities, and other community events have also been canceled, postponed or closed. The financial hardship is not only felt by the fairs and their employees but also by the service members and all the local businesses that rely on our Fairgrounds and the Network of California Fairs to survive. **Our Fair is funded year-round by event rentals and mostly the County Fair, which we are likely going to have to cancel with the Governors stand on large gatherings.** Not having the Fair and the event rentals, that have already canceled, will cripple them and they may have to close. Not having a Fairgrounds in our community would negatively affect so many: the less fortunate that benefit from the local fundraisers, OES, Cal Fire, Red Cross, the youth that raise, show and sell their animals, the experience and education that exhibitors gain while creating or raising an exhibit, the local sales tax, earned on and around fairgrounds because of the fair and events throughout the year, the hobbies and livelihood of showing dogs, horses, goats, rabbits throughout the year. Annual Home Shows and Business Expos, that promote our local businesses and drive local sales. Our Fairgrounds has had 3164 event/days per year at our local fairgrounds, and we are just one of 76 fairs affected.

I respectfully request your help during these unprecedented challenging times by appropriating \$300 million in the 2020-21 Budget as emergency assistance to the Network of California Fairs. Without this level of support, many fairs will close resulting in the State being responsible for our employees' salaries and health benefits, general liability and workers' compensation insurance, unfunded pension liabilities, risk pool service fees, property insurance, and the actual disposition of the fairground property.

Here to Help! The Network of California Fairgrounds has always been there to add to the quality of life and assist the citizens of this great state. We are very optimistic about the future of fairs and the strength of the Network and its partners. Now is the time to provide emergency funding and preserve the legacy of the state's Fairgrounds for future generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support of El Dorado County Fair.

Sincerely,

Cc: Western Fairs Association  
California Fairs Alliance

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