



Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with the California Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

In February 1921, Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau's then President J. J. Hollister led the charge to have a county fair in Santa Barbara County. A temporary board was named and under the auspices of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau and a fair was held in the fall of that year. From these humble beginnings our Santa Barbara County fairs have played an integral part in promoting the county's rich agricultural heritage. Through programs such as Grange, 4-H and FFA many young people have had the opportunity to form skills that have shaped them into today's leaders.

On behalf of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau and its 500 members and as community members of the 19th DAA and the 37th DAA, we are writing to urge your support for the California Fairs Network as you deliberate the state budget in the upcoming weeks.

California's re-opening plan indicates that mass gatherings like sporting events, county fairs, or concerts aren't going to happen any time soon. Fairgrounds are self-funded, and this State enforced closure has put all California Fairgrounds in jeopardy. The fairgrounds in Santa Barbara County are just two of the 76 fairgrounds representing all 58 counties in the state serving millions of people each year.

County fairgrounds are the heartbeat of their community, generating non-profit and community benefits and promoting a quality of life within the county. They generate more than 25,000 jobs and more than \$3 billion in annual economic impact while contributing over \$127 million of tax revenue to local and state government in California.

In addition, fairgrounds are an essential part of the infrastructure necessary for the state to effectively respond in natural disasters and emergencies, including wildfires, floods, and pandemics. Numerous California 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 with the pandemic.

To date, nearly half of California fairs have canceled, postponed, or drastically altered the annual fair, and more are expected to make that decision in the coming weeks.

We respectfully request your help during these challenging times by appropriating funds in the 2020-21 Budget as emergency assistance to the network of California fairs.

Without this support, our fairgrounds and many others will close, resulting in the State being responsible for the employees, the insurance, and property

We strongly urge you to provide emergency funding to all the state's fairgrounds in order to help us preserve the legacy for future generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teri Bontrager". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Teri Bontrager
Executive Director
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau

Cc:

Hannah-Beth Jackson, State Senator, Dist. 19
Monique Limon, State Assembly, Dist. 37
Jordon Cunningham, State Assembly Dist. 35
Dianne Feinstein, US Senator
Nancy Pelosi, US Representative, Ca 12th Dist.
Salud Carbajal, US Representative, Ca 24th Dist.