



## Washington State Fairs Association

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### Agricultural Fairs are Washington's Largest Classroom

#### **HB 1283 / SB 5277 - Ensuring the funding of agricultural fairs – PLEASE SUPPORT**

House Sponsors: Dent, Chapman, Chandler, Sullivan, Kretz, Blake, Maycumber, Dye, Mosbrucker, Stonier, Irwin, Schmick, Valdez, Van Werven, Springer, Barkis, Eslick, Wylie

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#### **Background:**

Current state law transfers \$2 million from the state general fund into the Fair Fund administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. The Fair Fund has not increased since 1998.

The Fair Fund provides support to 67 agricultural fairs in Washington State including:

- 32 County Fairs
- 5 Area Fairs (Multicounty)
- 18 Community Fairs
- 12 Youth Shows & Fairs sponsored by OSPI or WSU

There is a fair in every county except Mason. Benton and Franklin counties share a fair. The Fair fund is the primary means of support for youth shows and smaller county fairs.

Over 45,000 youth entered exhibits in agricultural fairs in 2017. Thousands more participated in contests and other events.

#### **Proposed change:**

The bill changes the statutory transfer to an appropriation. It recommends the appropriation be the greater of \$2 million or the estimated amount of state retail sales tax collected on sales occurring at fairs as estimated by the Department of Revenue. The appropriation is capped at \$3 million for this biennium and \$4 million for future biennia.

#### **Life Skills and Career Readiness:**

For youth involved in 4-H and FFA, the fair is the opportunity to showcase their curriculum-based project work for the year. The process of getting an exhibit to the fair takes dedication, perseverance, responsibility, self-confidence, organizational skills and teamwork. Other skills learned along the way include record keeping, economics, public speaking and more.

Studies show youth engaged in 4-H are:

- Nearly twice as likely to get better grades in school;
- Nearly twice as likely to plan to go to college;
- 41 % less likely to engage in risky behaviors; and
- 25 % more likely to positively contribute to their families and communities.