



April 24, 2020

CHAIR

Patricia Conklin
CEO, Dixon May Fair

VICE CHAIR

Dan Jacobs
CEO, Antelope Valley Fair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Alkire
CEO, Big Fresno Fair

Brandy Arredondo
Noel's Foods, Inc.

Becky Bartling
CEO, Sonoma County Fair

Joe Brengle
CEO, Contra Costa County Fair

Judy Carrico
Owner, Wildly Successful Fair Planning

Jody Gray
CEO, El Dorado County Fair

Ernie Guderjahn
Theater-16, Inc.

Allison Keaney
CEO, Sonoma-Marin Fair

Stephen Kenny
CEO, Butte County Fair

Tom Mitchell
CEO, Madera District Fair

Jennifer Monter
CEO, San Bernardino County Fair

Cliff Munson
CEO, Siskiyou Golden Fair

Rich Persons
CEO, Santa Maria Fairpark

Nancy Sites
CEO, Tulalake-Butte Valley Fair

Sarah Cummings
President & CEO

CALIFORNIA FAIRS ALLIANCE
1776 Tribute Road, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95815
P: 916.927.3100 • F: 916.927.6397
E: info@fairsnet.org • W: fairsnet.org

CFA Membership,

Based on information we received these last few days, California Fairs Alliance (CFA) does not anticipate any "emergency funding" for California Fairgrounds in the Governor's May revision of the 2020-21 State Budget, scheduled to be released May 14. Previously, Governor Newsom sent letters to the Legislature and to government agency secretaries advising them that the normal schedule for state budgeting is on hold and that the goals the governor described when he released the original Budget in January are up for renegotiation. The letter specifically advised the agency secretaries and department directors that they "should have no expectation of full funding for either new or existing proposals and adjustments. The only exception to this new evaluation criteria will be proposals or adjustments necessary to support the emergency response to COVID-19. New requests which fall outside these parameters will not be reviewed."

This means the Governor's January Budget, which included AB 1499 funding, is no longer the working document. Instead, we expect to see a "barebones" Budget document, that will likely divert some state funding to COVID-19 related emergency response issues and eliminate funding considered not to be absolutely necessary to the effective operation of state government.

Now is the time for the Network of California Fairs, our community and partners to make their voices heard in an effort to protect our future. To that end, Western Fairs Association and the California Fairs Alliance are developing a grassroots campaign to make our case to the Legislature for essential emergency funding. We will be laying out the elements of that campaign on our CFA conference call on April 29. However, we didn't want to lose any time so we are presenting you with Phase I – a letter to Legislators from your Board of Directors.

Please consider taking the attached letter to your Board for approval to send to your State Senator and Assembly Member. When sending the letter, we ask that you attach to the letter the forthcoming cumulative network data that will show the financial situation our fairs are facing due to the cancelation of all events. Additional cumulative network data to be included will be sent shortly, however, we wanted to deliver this communication to you now, so that you can begin the board approval process. Please use the attached spreadsheet to address the attached letter template to your local legislators, place the completed letter on your letterhead and mail one copy to your Senator and one copy to your Assembly Member.

This campaign will need to involve your community and we plan to provide you the tools necessary for us to be successful on our April 29, 2PM CFA Membership call. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or need further assistance. Together we will get this done!

Sincerely,


Sarah Cummings
President & CEO

<<Insert Date>>

The Honorable <<Insert Full Senator Name>>
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable <<Insert Asmb Mbr Name>>
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Emergency Funding for the California Fairs Network

Dear Senator <<insert last name>> and Assembly Member <<insert last name>>:

As Board Members of the <<Insert DAA/Fair Name>> we 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.

We are 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 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 32 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 we serve, like weddings, family reunions, seasonal trade shows, equestrian events, dog shows, quinceañeras, 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 California Fairs to survive.

We 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.

We look forward to working with you on this urgent matter and welcome the opportunity to talk with you in the near future. Thank you for your continued support of <<Insert Name of Fair>>.

Sincerely,

<<Sign>>

<<Insert Printed Name>>

Cc: Western Fairs Association
California Fairs Alliance