

## **HB 1591 County Fair Resiliency Grant**

Good morning, Chairman Beltz, Vice-Chair Hauck and members of the House Ag committee. For the record, my name is Mitch Ostlie. Representative from District 12.

I am here today to introduce **HB 1591**. The County Fair Resiliency Grant Program represents a significant investment in the very heart of our traditions, bringing both opportunity and renewal to the places that serve as a gathering point for our families, neighbors, and visitors alike.

Our county fairs are more than just an event—it's a tradition that has been passed down for generations, bringing together people from all walks of life to celebrate agriculture, craftsmanship, entertainment, and community spirit. For many of us, the fair is a symbol of our rural heritage and a showcase for the hard work of our farmers, artisans, and youth.

But to ensure that the fairs continue to thrive and meet the needs of an evolving communities, we must invest in its infrastructure. Whether it's upgrading aging facilities, improving safety features, enhancing accessibility, or expanding amenities for visitors, these improvements are essential in keeping the fairgrounds vibrant, functional, and welcoming for years to come.

The County Fair Resiliency Grant Program is designed to provide financial support for these much-needed upgrades. Through this program, we will provide funding for projects that enhance the fairgrounds and improve the experience for fairgoers.

This grant program is an opportunity for us to partner with local organizations, nonprofits, and municipalities to bring our vision for a stronger, more resilient fairground to life. It's about preserving the rich history of our county fairs while ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same sense of pride and joy.

This grant would be administered by the ag commissioner. This office would develop the criteria for the application process, which I anticipate would have some type of matching contribution by the local associations.

This concludes my report and I encourage a do pass of HB 1591.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I will stand for any questions.