

Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor



August 24, 2005

The Honorable Bill Bradbury
Secretary of State
900 Court Street NE, Room 136
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Secretary Bradbury:

I am returning enrolled House Bill 3502 unsigned, but not disapproved, for the reasons that follow:

I do not believe it is good public policy to make the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center a permanent part of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). House Bill 3502 fails in two ways to meet the test of good public policy. First, a “quick fix” fails to address the underlying challenges of the State Fair. Second, the mission and operation of the State Fair and Exposition Center is not consistent with the mission of the OPRD, and this bill fails to consider the impact of this transfer on the future of OPRD. Transfer of the Fair to the Parks Department, however rationalized, is plainly an expedient solution that simply passes the unmet financial needs of the Fair to OPRD.

Oregonians passed Measure 66 in 1998 to provide dedicated funding for the operation, acquisition, development and maintenance of state park and recreation facilities and programs statewide. The Parks Department has used these funds to make great strides in repairing, developing and acquiring parks. These funds also support local governments in acquisition and development of parks and recreation services. This is the vision that Oregonians had when they overwhelmingly approved the measure. The Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center was never a part of that vision.

Despite the significant problems with this piece of legislation, I have allowed it to become law because in the 2005-07 biennium, it is the only way to ensure the State Fair can continue to operate. The first official State Fair was held in 1861 and was a place for Oregonians to display Oregon products and people, with an emphasis on agriculture, forestry, technological innovations and manufacturing – Oregon’s key industries. This remains its mission today. The State Fair plays a unique role in unifying Oregon by bringing together people from both urban and rural Oregon to celebrate all that Oregon has

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to offer. A mechanism exists in law that provides ongoing state support for county fairs; we owe the State Fair and the Oregonians whose efforts are showcased there, the same benefit.

The State Parks and Recreation Department and the State Fair and Exposition Center will work together over the next two years, with their usual dedication to the people of Oregon. I know the Parks Board and Department will be diligent in providing assistance to help the Fair over the next two years and into the future.

Nevertheless, I am strongly opposed to the Oregon State Fair becoming a permanent part of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. I do not believe enrolled House Bill 3502 is a viable long-term solution to the issues facing the State Fair.

My 2007-09 recommended budget will make recommendations to the 2007 legislative session to correct this mistake of the short-term transfer of the State Fair to OPRD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theodore R. Kulongoski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor

TRK:TM:krq
c: Peter Courtney, President of the Senate
Karen Minnis, Speaker of the House