

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2433

As of February 15, 2024

Title: An act relating to administration of the southwest Washington fair by the Lewis county board of county commissioners.

Brief Description: Concerning administration of the southwest Washington fair by the Lewis county board of county commissioners.

Sponsors: Representative Orcutt.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/9/24, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs: 2/15/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows Lewis County to use the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds for the Southwest Washington Fair (Fair) and county purposes.
- Requires funds relating to Fair activities be managed and accounted for the same as other funds of Lewis County.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAND USE & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Agricultural Fairs. Agricultural fairs are fairs or exhibitions intended to promote agriculture by including, among other things, a balanced variety of exhibits of livestock and agricultural products. Agricultural fairs are divided into four categories:

- area fairs are organized to serve an area larger than one county;
- county and district fairs are organized to serve the interests of certain single counties;
- community fairs are organized primarily to serve a smaller area than an area fair or county fair; and

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- youth shows and fairs that serve three or more counties, educate and train rural youth, and are approved by Washington State University or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Fair Fund. State law requires that each fiscal year the state treasurer transfer certain funds from the state general fund into the fair fund administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Any state allocations must be made only as a reimbursement for operating expenses incurred by the fairs. Ninety-five percent of all allocations from the fair fund must be distributed to agricultural fairs based on a merit rating system set up by the director. This merit rating must take into account certain factors, including:

- area and population served, attendance, gate receipts, and community support;
- open or youth participation and the number and type of exhibits;
- evidence of successful achievement of the aims and purposes of the fair; and
- extent of improvements made to grounds and facilities from year to year and the overall condition and appearance of grounds and facilities.

Southwest Washington Fair. The Southwest Washington Fair (Fair) was established by the Legislature to serve a six-county area consisting of Lewis, Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, Cowlitz, and Pacific Counties. The commission that had managed the Fair was abolished by statute in 1973. Administration and control of all commission obligations were transferred to the Lewis County Board of Commissioners (board), and title to all Fair property was vested in the board. The Fair is categorized as a county and district fair but considered an agricultural fair for funding allocation purposes.

The board is authorized to appoint a citizens' commission (commission) to advise and assist in carrying out the Fair. The board chair is required to serve as the chair of the commission. The commission may designate the treasurer of Lewis County as the Fair treasurer. Funds relating to Fair activities must be kept separate and apart from Lewis County's general funds. The board is authorized to acquire real property for Fair purposes and may construct and maintain improvements for such purposes.

Summary of Bill: Fair property in Lewis County will be under the management and control of the Lewis County Board of Commissioners for Fair and county purposes. Funds relating to Fair activities must be managed and accounted for the same as other funds of Lewis County. The board may acquire real property for joint Fair and county purposes and may construct and maintain improvements for those purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will help Lewis County in the accounting area because the county is allocating so much time to keeping the funds separate and this bill will save time and money. This bill will allow Lewis County to operate in an integrated form.

Persons Testifying: PRO: BJ Kuykendall, Lewis County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.