



March 11, 2021

Tomas J. Aragon  
Director, California Department of Public Health  
PO Box 997377, MS 0500  
Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95899

**Re: Request for reopening Guidance for the Network of California Fairs**

Dear Director Aragon:

We write to ask that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) establish clear guidelines for the safe reopening of California's fairs. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent stay-at-home order, nearly every fair was canceled, postponed, or drastically altered in 2020. Without clear and achievable reopening guidelines, the same result is likely to happen again for most fairs and their calendared events in 2021.

California has 74 fairgrounds that host 77 fairs that serve nearly 35 million residents annually. Fairgrounds are essential to every county in the state and generate over \$35 million in non-profit and community benefits. They serve communities as exposition halls, concert venues, conference locations, recreation facilities, and learning centers. Fairgrounds have had to cancel events such as livestock shows, weddings, bridal expos, family reunions, seasonal trade shows, horse racing, quinceañeras, veterans and non-profit organization fundraisers, learning center activities, and various other community events. Collectively, fairgrounds employ 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.

This financial hardship will not only burden fairgrounds, fairs, and employees, but also the State which relies on the network of California fairs for its emergency response efforts to natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. During last year's wildfires, fairgrounds staged emergency vehicles and fire equipment, sheltered displaced residents and farm animals, and acted as distribution centers for emergency supplies. Currently, several fairgrounds are serving as Coronavirus testing and vaccination clinics, command centers for the Office of Emergency Services, or homeless shelters to help the state's effort to deal with the multitude of issues resulting from the pandemic. California fairgrounds have received limited, and in some cases no, revenue for providing these necessary services.

We ask the Administration and CDPH to provide the network of California fairs with clear guidance that will allow them to safely reopen their fairgrounds for outdoor events in 2021. By safely and responsibly allowing fairgrounds to once again host outdoor events, we can bring communities back together that have been isolated as a result of the pandemic and ensure that counties do not suffer further losses in employment and local revenues.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0001  
(916) 319-2001  
FAX (916) 319-2101



DISTRICT OFFICE  
280 HEMSTED DRIVE, SUITE 110  
REDDING, CA 96002  
(530) 223-6300  
FAX (530) 223-6737

Sincerely,

MEGAN DAHLE  
Assemblywoman, 1<sup>st</sup> District

FRANK BIGELOW  
Assemblymember, 5<sup>th</sup> District

BRIAN DAHLE  
Senator, 1<sup>st</sup> District

DEVON MATHIS  
Assemblymember, 26<sup>th</sup> District

CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY  
Assemblymember, 4<sup>th</sup> District

ROBERT RIVAS  
Assemblymember, 30<sup>th</sup> District

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0001  
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Assembly  
California Legislature

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FAX (530) 223-6737



SUSAN TALAMANTES EGGMAN  
Senator, 5<sup>th</sup> District

ADAM GRAY  
Assemblymember, 21<sup>st</sup> District

ANNA CABALLERO  
Senator, 12<sup>th</sup> District

EDUARDO GARCIA  
Assemblymember, 56<sup>th</sup> District

BOB WIECKOWSKI  
Senator, 10<sup>th</sup> District

DAVE MIN  
Senator, 37<sup>th</sup> District