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Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon House of Representatives

Re: HB 2561

Since 1999 the Siuslaw Institute of Deadwood, Oregon has been working with the Mapleton School District to supplement its science curriculum with natural resources studies and field work; to assist in the program and provide speakers for the state's longest running Outdoor School program; provide student participation in monitoring activities to both the Siuslaw Watershed Council and the US Forest Service; and over the past few years has filled a real gap in student learning and involvement since the District went to a 4-day school week by creating Watershed Fridays.

Many of our graduates have continued their education or joined the workforce in restoration, harvest, education and administrative careers in natural resource management and protection. We are proud of the ways we have been able to leverage additional funding and provide significant benefits in terms of additional personnel and curriculum to our beleaguered schools.

We see no benefit from re-tooling or re-packaging our existing and successful program under a different agency and alternative sources of funding. As a matter of fact, we think that we could offer lessons and guidance based on our success with the current system to other schools and natural resource education and outreach providers.

We would heartily endorse and support expansion of natural resources education and community outreach through the existing programs and sources, and we are apprehensive that a new system would cause undue hardship to successful programs like ours with no significant or ensured improvements. We offer our concerns and recommend continued contributions from the state to the existing and important work that we and others have achieved in the arena.

Johnny Sundstrom
President and Director,
The Siuslaw institute