

Hello,

I've copied a portion of Ryan Gordon's email about HB 2516. Please read it below... I've been involved with OWEB-funded youth stewardship projects in the Siuslaw Watershed for 18 years, and I completely agree with the concerns Ryan expresses about potential negative consequences to long-term, highly productive local programs that depend on OWEB's financial support.

I cannot, unfortunately, attend the session in Salem March 7, but I would be willing to participate in future discussions of this proposal. I believe I have an important voice of experience to advocate for the crucial contributions of the established watershed studies programs that empower our youth to responsible stewardship as a result of a series of classroom instruction/hands-on field experiences with restoration projects, grades 3-8.

Thank you,  
Jim Grano, Siuslaw Salmon and Watershed Studies coordinator  
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\*\*\* SSWS has recently received honors from Oregon Chapter American Fisheries Society and Oregon Invasive Species Council

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"HB 2516 potentially has significant unintended consequences. The creation of a statewide outdoor school program would have tremendous value, but as written this bill would divert funds away from existing restoration and education programs. In addition to their ecological benefits, OWEB-funded restoration projects provide living classrooms that councils, districts, and their partners are using to engage youth in place-based education and service learning programs. Many of these outreach efforts extend through the entire school year and expose youth to the natural world in their immediate environment. These programs also rely on local volunteers, reflect local needs and concerns, expose youth participants to community leaders, and help create pathways to life-long involvement in natural resource issues.

Perhaps rather than trying to fund a new program, it would make sense to look at how existing community-based education programs can be better leveraged and even expanded. OWEB's long-term investment strategy may be one place for this discussion to occur. There may also be other revenue sources that can be used to achieve the same outcomes without diverting funds from watershed restoration and related outreach programs.

I strongly encourage councils to share their concerns about this bill with members of the Committee on Energy and Environment either in writing or through testimony. It may also be valuable to share examples of how your council is supporting youth education with OWEB funding.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like additional information or would like assistance participating in the March 7 hearing".

Thank you,

Ryan

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Ryan Gordon  
Executive Director  
Network of Oregon Watershed Councils