

Testimony regarding House Bill 2516

Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment:

I am very supportive of having viable outdoor school programs for 5th and 6th grade Oregonians. In fact, my organization is very proud that we actually hold an outdoor school annually for students in Sweet Home. It is an important part of our organization, and I would like to see students throughout Oregon able to take part in similar programs.

However, House Bill 2516 is seeking to fund a statewide outdoor school program through Watershed Conservation Funds that were established after Oregonians overwhelmingly approved Measure 76 in 2010. The language in Measure 76 is quite clear; **monies earmarked for the Watershed Conservation Funds should only be used for land acquisition of important habitats, implementing stream and watershed restoration projects, and carrying out the assessments, planning, technical assistance, monitoring and outreach activities necessary for these projects.** Outdoor schools simply are not included in the types of activities that are clearly outlined above.

Outdoor schools are important, and I would support statewide efforts to make them more universal. Unfortunately, the method of funding outlined in House Bill 2516 is in conflict with what voters in every county in Oregon have overwhelmingly approved.

I urge members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment to seek means other than Watershed Conservation Funds to support outdoor schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric Hartstein". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Eric Hartstein
Coordinator
South Santiam Watershed Council