

FROM THE DESK OF

REPRESENTATIVE

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Oregon Natural Resources Organizations Urge a Yes Vote in Support of SB 439

SB 439 creates the policy structure for a statewide outdoor school program intended for all 5th and 6th graders. While the bill does not provide funding for the program, it does create a sound policy foundation in statute. Outdoor schools were originally started in the late 1950s when a forester and a teacher realized that young people were becoming less and less connected with Oregon's natural beauty and abundance.

The language of SB 439 was carefully crafted to ensure that outdoor schools create a balanced approach to teaching about that natural beauty and abundance. It will help young people learn about the importance of logging, farming, ranching, mining, fishing and hunting to Oregon's economy while still reflecting the importance of doing our part to support the environment. These two concepts need not be mutually exclusive, but all too often the importance of natural resources to the economy and our way of life is left out of the equation. SB 439 makes sure it is part of a balanced curriculum.

It is our expectation that when the program is funded it will create an opportunity for the young people of this state to understand the importance of natural resources, where those resources come from and the part they play in our lives. It is our hope that some of these young people will become inspired to seek employment opportunities in the Natural Resources sector where the need is keenly felt.

We in the Natural Resources Sector ask you to create a balanced opportunity for the children of this state to understand both our responsibilities and opportunities as we steward this state's tremendous natural resources and tremendous natural beauty. This is one opportunity where we think everyone can agree that the state will be better off by the bill's passage.

