

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Senate Committee On Education****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 03/26/15**Action:** Do Pass With Amendments. Refer To Ways And Means By Prior Reference
(Printed A-Eng).**Meeting Dates:** 02/19, 03/26**Vote:**

Yeas: 4 - Beyer, Gelsler, Hass, Roblan

Nays: 3 - Baertschiger Jr, Knopp, Kruse

Prepared By: Gretchen Engbring, Committee Administrator**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Establishes Outdoor Education Account to provide outdoor school program. Appropriates moneys from General Fund to Oregon Department of Administrative Services for deposit in account. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2015.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Accessibility of outdoor education
- Importance of supporting experiential and hands-on student learning opportunities
- Culturally relevant and area-specific programming
- Program relevance to science, technology, engineering and math
- Role of Oregon State University Extension Service in supporting outdoor education programs

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Allows six-day, residential, hands-on educational experience or equivalent. Specifies that educational experience should reflect local community needs and contexts. Specifies supporting role of Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service as grant program administrator and details other duties. Lists criteria for priority grants and what programs awarded grants must include. Requires OSU Extension Service to convene advisory committee for purpose of administering grant program.

BACKGROUND:

House Bill 2544 (2009) established the Oregon Environmental Literacy Task Force for the purpose of developing the Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan. The task force was to create a plan to identify and encourage programs that allow students to directly experience the outdoors by providing environmental education experiences and that incorporate field-based learning, place-based learning, service learning, outdoor learning or experiential learning. The plan was released in 2010.

According to the Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition, participation in outdoor school programs by county is currently estimated as follows: eight counties have greater than 80 percent of students participating in programs; eight counties have participation ranging between 41 and 80 percent; eight counties have participation ranging from 21 to 40 percent; eight counties have participation that is under 20 percent; and four counties have no participation.

Senate Bill 439-A establishes an Outdoor Education Account in the State Treasury for the purpose of funding a six-day, residential, hands-on outdoor school program or equivalent for fifth and sixth grade students across the state.

Senate Bill 439-A appropriates \$44,000,000 out of the General Fund for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015 for deposit into the Outdoor Education Account.