

Good Morning Committee Chair Witt and members of the committee,

My name is Kris Elliott, and I am the Oregon State University Extension Service Outdoor School Program Leader. During this challenging time, our continued efforts are centered around safety and our desire to ensure students still have a high quality outdoor school experience despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Impact of Covid-19:

Typically, 40% of students attend ODS in the fall, 60% in the spring. Unfortunately, due to mandatory school closures, 99% of ODS programming in Spring was canceled. Though school reports are still being received by our office, we estimate that approximately 25,000 students had their spring ODS plans canceled (up to 14,000 were 6th graders).

Response strategies:

Early this spring before cancellation and as the COVID-19 situation emerged, our team, in consultation with our advisory committee and partners, developed the following response strategies to ensure our schools and outdoor school providers would be prepared for possible impacts.

- **Strategy 1:** provided additional funding for cleaning, sanitization and safety at outdoor school.
- **Strategy 2:** provided funding for districts to recoup their ODS costs already incurred and provided for funding to honor cancellation contracts with ODS providers and camp facilities. In fact, districts were eligible for up to 60% of their originally approved ODS funding in order to pay providers to develop alternative ODS programming, including online curriculum and other outdoor school educational resources for students and families. We have received feedback that these resources have been helpful to teachers, schools and families and they work to continue serving students during this difficult time.
- **Strategy 3:** provided funding for 6th graders (will be 7th graders in the fall) who's spring ODS was canceled.
- **Strategy 4:** focused our office on developing and curating online learning activities for students, families and teachers. These resources updated and released each week and are available in English and Spanish on our website.

2020-2021 Programming:

As of today, our office anticipates a 14% cut to ODS funding this fiscal year due to declining lottery revenue. It is still unclear what revenue will look like for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, though we are developing contingency budget strategies in the event revenue continues to decline.

We will continue to provide districts with support and funding resources for 6th graders (will be 7th graders) who had their spring plans canceled

We will renew response strategy 1, providing additional reimbursements for ODS facility cleaning and safety related to COVID-19.

Finally:

We will want to work with the Governor's office to seek further guidance on the unique and specific needs of outdoor school programming during camp and school reopening.

We believe ODS is an integral, transformative experience for Oregon's youth, and OSU Extension Outdoor School, our partners at Friends of Outdoor School and the Gray Family Foundation will continue to develop ways to ensure students will still have the opportunity to engage in some form of outdoor school programming while keeping safety as the first priority. We also continue to plan for and seek ways to ensure the outdoor school network emerges from this pandemic even stronger than it was before. Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today, and I would be happy to address any of your questions at this time.