

To the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and McLain, and members of the Committee,

I would like to thank the Oregon Legislature for its investment in Outdoor School over the last two biennia. This has allowed the opportunity for many children to experience outdoors for the first time, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability or socio-economic status.

As an educator and parent, I have witnessed the transformation Outdoor School provides Oregon's youth. They are places where students gain confidence, relationship skills, and self-awareness. These attributes are even more important this school year with the emotional impact of COVID-19 on students and the struggles with distance learning. During the pandemic, Outdoor School has been instrumental in getting students outside and physically participating in education by providing the resources for students to learn in their own hometowns and backyards. While things are far from normal, Outdoor School was the constant that provided our students motivation to come back for more each day.

As a community member, Oregon's economy—and future—relies on supporting our natural resource industries, such as timber, tourism, outdoor recreation, farming and more. Outdoor School is a great way to teach future generations that they don't need to choose between our economy and our environment.

In Appreciation,

Shannon Parvankin
Gresham, Oregon