

Good afternoon Senator Dembrow, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Ellen Wylde and I am the Board secretary of the nonprofit Wylde Wind and Water founded by my daughter, Fiona Wylde.

Thanks to a game-changing grant from the Oregon Community Summer Grant Program we had a fantastic first season engaging 311 youth and 192 adults in nine water-sports programs in 11 weeks. We received the grant money in mid-July and hit the ground running creating an exciting, vibrant three week camp with the Hood River Migrant Education Program that was taught in English and Spanish. The 53 youth that participated had no experience of water activities-some had never been down to the waterfront or knew how to swim. Thanks to collaborations with other community organizations, businesses, and volunteers, the kids learned to Stand Up Paddle, Kayak, and paddle in an Outrigger Canoe. The educational aspects of the program included an overview of the riparian ecosystems in Nichols Boat Basin,

and a meteorologist's presentation explaining with fun science experiments how to read weather conditions to make informed decisions on how and when to recreate safely in the Columbia River.

One of the absolute highlights of the summer was the creation of our Intern program. When we initially contacted Patricia Cooper, the director of the Hood River Migrant Education Program, she said some of the older kids would not be able to attend camp because they worked in the orchards to help support their families. I thought about this and said, "What if we create an intern program where older kids can simultaneously come to camp, and get paid as apprentices to learn new skill sets making them viable candidates as future employees in water-sports industries?" We hired 6 teenagers at \$15.00 an hour. They worked a total of 60 hours over the 3 weeks and were the hardest working bunch I've ever met. For each of these kids it was their first job outside the agricultural industry.

As so often happens in life, you never know what will be the trigger to excite the imagination and discover new opportunities. This is what WW&W's intern program was all about and it mirrors exactly the 5 described goals in Section 1 of Senate Bill 531. We urge you to pass and fund this bill to continue what we've started.

For more information visit:

<https://www.wyldewindandwater.org/>

I suggest watching the video on the home page first!

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This summer's Wylde Wind & Water Interns, left to right, were Julian Radavan, Omar Radavan, Favian Lopez, Erandy Galindo, Bryanna Padilla and Ashley Padilla with Fiona Wylde, director of WW&W.

Contributed photo

HRVHS student testifies before Oregon Senate committee

■ **Staff report**
Columbia Gorge News

On Sept. 22, Wylde Wind & Water (WW&W) intern Erandy Galindo, 16, was invited to testify in front of the Oregon Senate Interim Committee on Education chaired by Sen. Michael Dembrow. Galindo, an intern for WW&W this summer, is a junior at Hood River Valley High School.

Six students from around the state testified about their experiences with summer programs funded by a grant from the Oregon Association of Educational School Districts (OAESD). The event was organized by Oregon ASK Expanded Learning Partnership, directed by Beth Unverzagt.

WW&W, founded by Hood River local Fiona Wylde, was one of those grant-funded programs, serving 53

students over three weeks as part of the Hood River County School District's migrant summer education program.

Below is Galindo's testimony before the committee on education:

My name is Erandy Galindo, and I had the pleasure of participating as an intern at Wylde Wind & Water Aug. 15 through Sept. 2 down at our local waterfront in Hood River. Some of our daily activities included teaching kids a different kind of water activity (like SUP, kayak, ocean canoe each day of the week as well as having guest speakers (like) Riverkeeper and Weatherflow.

I got the opportunity to learn about new jobs at our local waterfront as well as create an environment where kids feel safe and welcome in trying new water activities. I also had a personal

experience with two little girls who attended the first week of camp. I saw how they faced their fears in getting into the water and learning how to swim and getting comfortable. This was especially heartwarming because they both made me letters thanking me for teaching them how to swim and being with them — just being there for them when they were scared of something new which they were trying. It was really heartwarming.

I also learned the importance of wearing a life jacket and I think this opportunity could really benefit our community more because I feel not only the kids, but the interns learned a lot from it.

Thank you for your time.

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WW&W is urging everyone to contact their legislature to continue to finance these summer programs.