

Hello,

My name is Felix de Long, but my friends at Outdoor School know me as Apollo. I'm asking you to support Rep. Hudson's HB 4112 to restore \$6 million in Outdoor School (ODS) funding for 2026, and to reject any further cuts. The general public wholeheartedly supports funding ODS, as seen in Measure 99. ODS is one of the most important programs in Oregon education, and restoring funding would help so many more kids be able to access hands-on science in nature, something they can't find almost anywhere else.

This issue is important to me because I've been impacted by ODS in so many ways across my life; in 6th grade, high school, and beyond.

When I went to ODS in 6th grade, I got a chance to learn about nature in a way that I never would be able to in a classroom. The bond that I had with my Student Leaders & fellow classmates was indescribable, and I remember crying on the bus on the way back because I didn't want to leave.

As a high schooler, people knew me for loving Outdoor School. I volunteered for the program since my sophomore year, and ended high school with 7 weeks between Cedar Ridge, Trickle Creek, & Arrah Wana. Every single week I went, not only did I meet people that I still call friends to this day, but I also learned things about myself and others that I will never forget. I made so many amazing memories there, and hopefully helped kids do the same.

In high school, I was also a member of the Student Leader Advisory Committee (SLAC), which is a group of Student Leaders that met monthly to improve the program as a whole, whether that be in lesson planning, recruitment, or celebrations; this even included hosting a panel for all ODS staff (in the Northwest sector) to talk about how we can make the experience better for Student Leaders. This is to say that I've been involved with ODS every single way I can, all because I love the program so much.

I'm currently at Oregon State University as an Education Major, thanks to Outdoor School. ODS sparked my love for education, which has led me to pursue it as a career both in and out of the classroom. I would love to return to the program as a staff member to continue the cycle of inspiring kids to be Student Leaders and staff, just as many of my friends have done as well.

Once again, I ask you to support Rep. Hudson's HB 4112 to restore \$6 million in Outdoor School (ODS) funding for 2026 and to reject any further cuts, so 5th/6th graders can experience nature in a way they never have before, high school Student Leaders can discover their love of teaching, and staff can make a career of doing the thing they love with likeminded people.

Sincerely, Felix "Apollo" de Long