

LETTER TO LEGISLATOR FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T ATTEND ADVOCACY DAY

Honorable _____
Representative/Senator
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310

Dear _____,

Oregon has long been a leader in conservation education. Outdoor School began over 60 years ago in southern Oregon as a way to educate an urbanizing population on the importance of agriculture, forestry and healthy natural systems. We've learned that the kind of hands-on learning rooted in science practiced at Outdoor School successfully engages students and improves learning outcomes. In 2010, Oregon adopted an "Environmental Literacy Plan" targeting all grade levels with age-appropriate experiences using STEM standards that will directly result in improved career opportunities for graduates as well as creating more aware and knowledgeable citizens. Now all we need is to put these great ideas to work for us.

A recent study conducted by the Gray Family Foundation found that less than half of Oregon middle school students attend any kind of Outdoor School. Students in poorer districts are particularly deprived of this effective and transformative experience. We are losing a critical opportunity to connect Oregonians across divides of income, geography, and knowledge.

I am asking you to include funding for Outdoor School in the State's Education budget for the next biennium. The investment of \$34M per biennium (a mere 0.5% of the current education budget) would restore the full Outdoor School program for every 6th grade student in Oregon.

Thank you very much for considering this request.

Sincerely,