



Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Support of LD 156, An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8

Dear Representative Brennan, Senator Rafferty, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 156, An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8, on behalf of the Maine Environmental Education Association's 2000+ members and supporters. For 40 years, the Maine Environmental Education Association has worked to enhance and amplify the efforts of individuals and organizations to build environmental awareness, appreciation, understanding, and action in Maine.

Maine is a national leader in environmental education and outdoor learning, which has many benefits for students and is a powerful tool for building environmental connections. A recent analysis of environmental education research by Stanford University found that students who participate in outdoor education score significantly higher on measures of critical thinking. Perseverance, self-confidence, motivation, and leadership are only a few skills students report gaining and are crucial in developing the next generation of problem solvers and civic leaders. In addition to gaining these skills, regular time outdoors leads to better health and fitness, mental health benefits, better sleep, and a longer life span.

While the benefits of outdoor learning are numerous, too few students today have the opportunities to engage with the environment due to several barriers. The state has a chance to ensure that more Maine students can reap the benefits of outdoor education by passing LD 156 – An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8. To promote the engagement of Maine youth in the beautiful natural world the state has to offer, and thus contribute to building the next generation of Maine's environmental stewards, I encourage you to support LD 156.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'a. Ifeji'.

Amara Ifeji
Director of Policy
Maine Environmental Education Association