

Statement of Support to LD 1817  
An Act to Support Outdoor Education by Establishing the Outdoor School  
for All Maine Students Program  
May 10, 2023

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the distinguished Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Amy Tucker. I live in the town/city of Wayne. I am a middle school teacher and a board member of the Maine Association for Middle Level Educators. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1817.

There are so many benefits to outdoor education, including those to students, teachers and schools, and the community, in general. Additionally, giving students a connection to the outdoors and the environment can foster a mindset of stewardship.

Our middle school team was fortunate to be able to spend four days at Chewonki prior to the pandemic, and the benefits to us as a team, to students as individuals, and to our school community were immeasurable. We had shy sixth graders demonstrate powerful leadership skills among their seventh- and eighth-grade teammates. We bonded through challenges and learning about how to live sustainably. We hiked and camped and climbed and cooked and shared meals together, and it was an experience that I would encourage for all students.

This spring, our current middle school team is heading to the Schoodic Education Adventure to explore geology, forestry, mapping, tree identification, and invasive species. We will have incredible opportunities to be outside learning together in an hands-on, real-world environment.

These opportunities are priceless, and though these programs work with schools to keep costs as low as possible, it is still out of reach for many. We have spent countless hours fundraising to pay for transportation and for the programs themselves. It has been challenging for us to do this, and we know that in many communities, it would be overwhelming. With the

support of LD 1817, all Maine students would be able to engage in these life-changing opportunities.

For these reasons, I would ask you to support LD 1817 and vote ought to pass on this bill. Thank you to the sponsor for bringing forward this bill and thank you to the committee members for your work on this Committee.

Amy Tucker  
Wayne, Maine