

Steve Cartwright
St.George
LD 895

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Testimony in support of LD 895, An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor Education by
Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program
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Honorable Chair and Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Committee. I write in support of LD 895, An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor
Education by Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program

Greetings, I'm Steve Cartwright from Tenants Harbor, a member of the St.George
selectboard and president of the board for Tanglewood and Bluberry Cove 4-H
Camps and Learning Centers. As a former counselor and long-time camp board
member, I've lived and breathed the value of having children interact and appreciate
nature. It builds character and it builds good citizenship. The value of outdoor
experience goes way beyond money and material things. It can sustain a life, and in
turn, we can hope to sustain the environment. No child should be denied this
opportunity. At age 74, still feel the sense of wonder when I wander the shore, hike
through the spruce and fir forest.

We can learn a lot from Chief Standing Bear, a political activist who championed
14th Amendment Constitutional rights. He said,
The elders were wise. They knew that man's heart, away from nature, becomes hard;
they knew that lack of respect for growing, living things, soon led to lack of respect
for humans, too.

We can help our children understand and care for the natural environment that
sustains all life. So they can grow up to be stewards of our endangered planet. So they
can climb a mountain and marvel at the mountains beyond, where streams run to the
sea. So they can study the beauty of a starfish or a sea anemone, and realize that the
best things in life are not things, but experience and connection ~ with others, with
each other.

Thank you for giving this some thought. Outdoor experiential learning is part of the
heart and soul of Maine.