



Statement of Support for LD 895
An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor Education by Establishing
The Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program

March 11, 2025

Senator Bennett and members of the distinguished Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. My name is Nancy Kennedy. I live in the town of Newcastle and am writing as the President of the Chewonki Foundation in Wiscasset, Maine. I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies from the University of Maine, a Master of Divinity from Bangor Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D in Natural Resources and Environment Education from the University of New Hampshire.

On behalf of students in the state of Maine, I am writing in support of bill LD 895, which creates the opportunity for schools to apply for and receive funding for their students to attend an Outdoor School Program.

I have dedicated my career to working with children, and over the years, I have repeatedly seen the profound impact of intentional, experiential learning in nature on students' intellectual, emotional, and physical development. LD 895 provides thoughtful, hands-on learning opportunities that help young people explore both who they are and how they navigate the world. These experiences equip them with essential skills—improving communication, fostering a sense of community, reducing anxiety, strengthening connections with others and the natural world, instilling a sense of responsibility, and developing critical thinking abilities.

Should LD 895 pass and be funded, the choice will remain with each school to decide to take advantage of this opportunity or not, as well as decide which program aligns with their vision for the education of their students. For those who choose to avail themselves of this money, LD 895 will provide for transformative learning for their students who will develop a curiosity and knowledge about the world around them, challenge them to overcome limitations they created for themselves, discovering that they can (often) do more than they think they can and grow up to be healthy, productive leaders who make positive contributions to their schools and communities.

Today, with research backing up the theory, there is little argument that Outdoor Education has the power to transform lives. Please join me in supporting LD 895 and give the young people of Maine an educational boost.

With appreciation,

Nancy Kennedy, President, Chewonki