

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 Kaylan Scott I live in the Town of Bowdoinham I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1817

As an outdoor educator and program administrator, I have seen firsthand how these outdoor school experiences support a child's educational and emotional development The relationships forged during multi-day programs at outdoor schools—with teachers, peers, and the natural world—are transformational Our teacher partners routinely comment on the impact this relationship building has on the rest of their academic year, and beyond I can personally attest to that phenomenon the path that led me to stand up here today started at an outdoor school when I was a middle school student

In addition to the student and teacher benefits of outdoor schools, LD1817 represents a remarkable opportunity to support workforce development I personally manage the hiring of 11- 16 outdoor educators each year These skilled professionals can be challenging to recruit and retain given the seasonal nature of the work Many of our employees, including native Mainers, must leave the state they love in order to find meaningful employment throughout the year LD1817 will provide more security and predictability to their work, permitting outdoor educators to put roots down in the state of Maine Their employment allows them to participate in the local economies and bring vibrancy and expertise to our communities

For me, this matter is critical both to the field I care so much about and to my family While I've been able to obtain year-round employment in the outdoor education industry, my partner and sister, both outdoor educators, continue to navigate the unreliable landscape of seasonal work in Maine LD1817 would increase the number of students able to attend outdoor schools, and that reliability could provide more and more consistent opportunities for my family and the many other passionate Maine-based outdoor educators

I would ask you to support LD 1818 and vote to pass this bill Thank you to the sponsor for bringing this bill forward and thank you to the committee members for your work on this Committee