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## Maine State Legislature

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### **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 honorable colleagues My name is Nathan Carlow, I represent part of my hometown of Buxton and a part of Hollis in the Maine State Legislature, and I am providing this testimony in strong support of LD 1817

When I was a student, I had the opportunity to participate in one of the several outdoor education programs available across Maine, but was surprised to recently learn that this is not a service widely available throughout the State. Having had the experience of serving on a school board, I am always hesitant to add more to the plates of our already hard-working and dedicated educators, and this bill makes it easier for our schools to take advantage of existing outdoor education centers. These centers have been providing outdoor education for decades and they have proven that outdoor education supports both the child and the teacher.

For example, I have heard stories about the value of bringing the full class into a multiple overnight programming at one of these outdoor centers at the beginning of the school year. It allows the classroom to build a connection and for the students and teacher to see each other in a different light. This relationship building sets a strong foundation for the entire year so that the teacher and students have a better capacity for learning together.

But these centers have only been able to provide the opportunities to less than 25 percent of Maine students through private funding for scholarships and to schools that have the capacity to handle their own fundraising. This is the moment for Maine to step up and be at the forefront of this nation-wide movement to support allowing all of our children to have the opportunity to learn in our incredible outdoors and to benefit from this programming.

There will be many teachers and students who will testify after me, and their support is a testament to the need for this investment in outdoor education. This is an incredible opportunity to support programming that adds value to our students' education and adds value to our schools' curriculum.

In closing, I would also like to point out that it has been incredible to see a strong bipartisan and bicameral showing in support of this bill. I was pleased to collaborate with my friend Senator Brenner on an editorial that was published in the Press Herald this past Sunday about the importance of outdoor education, and I am heartened by the bipartisan nature of this effort.

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.

Respectfully,

Nathan Carlow  
State Representative