

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

Hello, my name is Wyatte Damon and I am a 6th grader at Agnes Gray Elementary in West Paris. I know first hand about the benefits of outdoor learning and what programs like this can do for students

It was one of the last nights we were at camp. We were out near the beach in a small group. Our counselors had us standing in a group in the dark. I was really excited. I had never done anything like this before. I kept thinking about how lucky I was. Our counselor brought out 5 small telescopes. Looking through a telescope, I was able to see the International Space Station, Jupiter and about a million stars.

During this experience I felt excitement and a desire to keep looking for more. This was just one experience I had at camp that week. But that excitement and desire to do and learn more was what I felt during the whole week. I would not have had this experience if it were not for a scholarship to attend Camp Susan Curtis last summer.

When I go to camp I feel safe and happy. I feel safe because the staff is trained to keep me physically safe as well as emotionally. I want every student in Maine to have this experience. To go somewhere where they learn new things about nature and themselves, try things for the first time and feel supported. The confidence that I build at camp comes back to school with me and has made me a better student and person.