



Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

March 12, 2025

RE: LD 895, An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor Education by Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program

Dear Sen. Talbot Ross, Rep. Pluecker, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 895, *An Act to Support Immersive Outdoor Education by Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program*.

Education is at the heart of Maine Audubon's mission. We work every day with children and adults to foster environmental literacy so that they can become more informed and effective stewards of Maine's wildlife and habitat. In addition to our long-standing adult programs—including bird walks, trips, speakers, and other classes designed to help adults further their environmental education—we regularly offer classes and programs for children and families, host field trips, visit classrooms, run summer and vacation camps, and provide programs and resources for educators. Though this legislation would not directly benefit Maine Audubon, it supports our broader goal of environmental literacy and access.

LD 895 has been developed over years of informational interviews, listening sessions, network and collaboration with many organizations, educators, and individuals. The bill, which is similar to LD 1817 which passed in the 131st session but died on the appropriations table, will provide equitable access to outdoor education opportunities for middle school students. As of 2024, less than a quarter of Maine middle school students have the opportunity to participate in an Outdoor School Program¹. The benefits of immersive environmental education experiences are numerous, from enhancing academic engagement, mental and physical health benefits, strengthened social and emotional skills, increased environmental literacy, and connection to Maine ecosystems.

¹ Maine Outdoor Schools for All, <https://mosfa.org/>

Students, teachers, administrators, and the people of Maine stand to benefit from this program, and we encourage the committee to support the passage of LD 895. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate