

Caroline Moore  
Winter Harbor  
LD 1817

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 Caroline Moore. I currently live in the town of Winter Harbor. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1817.

I strongly believe that all Maine students should have access to a welcoming, supporting, outdoor education experience. As a middle school public school educator and current outdoor educator, I have seen the positive impact that outdoor education and programming, such as that supported by LD 1817, has on students. This act, in particular, focuses on the equity of widening and ensuring that more Maine students have access to these opportunities, which is incredibly important.

To note,

(1) Children benefit from outdoor education and less than 25 percent of Maine students are able to access outdoor education and this inequity needs to be addressed because data shows that it supports the child's educational journey, the child's emotional and mental health, and the child's connection to Maine's incredible outdoor heritage.

(2) Teachers and schools benefit from outdoor education. For example, teachers' relationship with their students grows after an outdoor education program, because it allows each to experience the other in a new light; and

(3) The community benefits from outdoor education programs. For example, it benefits in regard to workforce development. This would have a significant impact on full-time employment jobs opportunities for people in Maine right now. Oregon, with about triple the number of students that Maine has, noted that outdoor school programming would support more than 600 jobs and more than 27 million dollars of income in Oregon on an annual basis.

For these reasons, I would ask you to support LD 1818 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.