

Hello, my name is Rain Perez and I am the Executive Assistant at Maine Outdoor School in Milbridge Maine.

I am writing to testify in opposition to LD 1817 An Act to Support Outdoor Education by Establishing the Outdoor School for All Maine Students Program.

I feel that this bill should be amended in order to be more accessible and inclusive to all Maine students. As the bill is currently written, focusing on overnight experiences 3-5 days long and only for grades 4th through 8th, it is incredibly limiting and does not allow for students to truly reap the educational and wellness benefits that can be gained when outdoor programming is integrated into their lives both at school and within their own communities.

I also feel that overnight experiences will be unable to properly accommodate the needs of all Maine students. While I realize that the bill states that day programs will be provided when overnight programs are impractical, I believe that will only lead to disenfranchising students with disabilities and special needs.

While I believe this bill has the potential to enrich the lives of Maine students, I cannot support it until I am confident that it will be able to provide more consistent and equitable programming to all students.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rain Perez