

GAIL Scott
Portland
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 Gail R. Scott. I live in the town/city of Portland. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1817. Having raised our son in rural Northern Maine, I know first hand how much he benefited from individual and educational experiences in the fields, woods, stream, mountains and farmlands of our environment in Aroostook County. In fact, his entire college, graduate school, and career track was shaped and fostered by his early life in the outdoors—through Boy Scout overnight summer camp for three years—all filled with outings, hiking, mountain climbing, camping, fishing, canoeing, rafting, and exploring. High school and college courses included winter camping, cross-country ski trips and much more.

These experiences prepared him for achieving a Bachelor's degree in Human Ecology from College of Atlantic and then several years of leading youth on outdoor adventure trips through Outward Bound, outdoor education sessions for middle school students (overnights) at Chewonki and 3-week paddling trips for teenagers on the Allagash Waterways.

And finally, he completed a Master's Degree in Environmental Education, followed by a career in programming and delivering outdoor education, camping, and year-round outdoor environmental education for young people of all ages.

All because he had opportunities (and the privilege) of exciting and meaningful outdoor education. Every Maine child deserves the same. That is why I support—and urge you to support LD 1817.

I know from watching how the outdoor education programs he developed just how much teachers and schools benefit from outdoor education. I've seen teachers' relationship with their students grows after an outdoor education program, because it allows both student and teacher experience the other in a new light and grasp science and natural history concepts in a more hands-on and meaningful way. Parents and communities benefit as well as they witness new ways that young people learn and grow and contribute to society.

For these reasons, I would ask you to support LD 1818 and vote ought to pass on this bill. Thank you to the sponsors who are bringing forward this bill and thank you to the committee members for your work on this Committee.