

Cheryl Weyl  
Freeport  
LD 1817

Dear All,

I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1817.

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.

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

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.

My kids are lucky to be part of RSU5 where during COVID they spent every other day at Wolfe's Neck Farm, my son is in 5th grade and just arrived at Chewonki for a 4 day adventure, and my daughter will have that chance in a few years. These are monumental experiences. Last night I sat with two RSU5 graduates who are in their 40s and the spoke about their trip to Chewonki. Life long learning happens and our state deserves to be enjoyed by ALL kids.

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.

Thank you,  
Nina Weyl

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Nina Cotton Weyl  
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