



February 16th, 2024

Reference: Seeking Funding in HB 5201

Co-Chairs Girod, Holvey, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Amanda Craig, project manager for the Trust for Public Lands Oregon Rural Community Schoolyards Program. We have submitted testimony on the record for these projects and have submitted a capital construction funding request for 1 million dollars for this biennium which will be matched with federal and private funding.

Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit with the mission of “connecting people to the outdoors” and has been doing so for the last 50 years. Trust for Public Land has a long history of schoolyard renovation in Urban spaces, over 300 across the county, Oregon is the first place we’ve started schoolyard work in rural communities. Our Community Schoolyards projects partner with students, teachers, and community members to transform outdated and inaccessible schoolyards into vibrant multi-generational spaces. We create safe, healthy, accessible, and equitable access to nature, play areas, outdoor classrooms, and public gathering places reflecting the community values and cultures.

Trust for Public Land is working with the Madras and Ontario School Districts to renovate the outdated Madras Elementary (K-5) and Alameda Elementary (K-6) schoolyards. A robust student, community lead engagement and design process has been completed at both schools, and construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2024, and Spring of 2025. Madras and Ontario represent some of the most diverse rural communities in Oregon, and the poorest counties in terms of health & and education outcomes and economic hardships. At both elementary schools over 50% of students identify as people of color, and both schools are at 100% for the Title 1 free lunch program.

Equitable access to nurturing green space supports the educational, emotional, and physical health of all students and community members. Over the last two years, we have been working with students, teachers, district staff, and a diverse group of community partners to design and program their future Community Schoolyards. The one million dollar ask will go toward capital construction costs for the schoolyards in 2024 and 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Craig".

Amanda Craig
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