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TO: Oregon House Committee on Education

FR: Maura C. Roche

DA: Feb 11, 2026

**RE: Support for HB 4112—Restoration of Lottery Funds to Outdoor School**

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Chairs Hudson and Vice-Chair McIntire, Members of the Committee. I am providing testimony in favor of HB 4112, the restoration of Lottery Fund dedicated to Outdoor School.

Outdoor School is a critical component of Oregon's Public Education system for many reasons. Learning about the natural world in our increasingly highly digitized society has never been more important. Outdoor school enhances students' connection to nature, promotes physical activity and provides hands on experiential learning.

I went to Outdoor School and it impacted my life in important ways. I worked in summer camps for 5 years while I was at school...imparting the sense of wonderment in nature that I experienced at Outdoor School. I also helped found a camp for youth with severe food allergies who cannot participate in conventional camps due to food safety concerns. These are kids who have never spent a night away from home or eaten a meal not prepared by the family...being at sleep away camp was life altering for them.

In addition to all the science, nature and outdoor learning, Outdoor School also fosters critical thinking, creativity and social skills. There is programing that encourages leadership development for youth and the independence of going away to a residential site for a week. This type of experience helps develop self-reliance and other skills that serve youth well in many settings.

Dedicated Lottery funding for Outdoor School was approved by Oregon Voters via ballot measure. Outdoor School is something that voters across Oregon...rural, urban, eastern, coastal, valley, southern, gorge, central...all areas of the state, deeply support. We understand that Oregon faces big revenue reductions to the General Fund and we appreciate that lawmakers face difficult choices. HB 4112 would restore \$6M in Lottery Funds (half of the 2025 cut) so that Outdoor School programming statewide can be stabilized in the second half of the biennium. M99 enjoyed majority support in 34 of Oregon's 36 counties demonstrating the common values and deep unity around the tradition of sending Oregon youth to Outdoor School. Outdoor School is one of the things that makes Oregon, Oregon.

**Again, thank you for your service to the State of Oregon and I strongly urge you to pass HB 4112 to support restoration of Oregon Outdoor School Lottery funding.**