

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

Chairs Hudson and Vice-Chair McIntire, Members of the Committee.

My name is Melynda Retallack and 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 live and in person in our increasingly highly digitized environment has never been more important. Outdoor school enhances students' connection to nature, promotes physical activity and provides hands on experiential learning.

ODS was transformative for me - and inspired a life long love and inspiration to care for our natural environments.

I attended ODS as a 6th grader in the 80's and also volunteered throughout High School, and both my kids attended Outdoor School and it impacted my/their lives in important ways. In addition to all the science, nature and outdoor learning, it also fosters critical thinking, creativity and social skills. There is programming that fosters 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.

We need statewide support for ODS - it is a critical opportunity for our youth and the benefits last a lifetime for the kids able to participate.

Outdoor School is a Lottery Funded program that was approved by Oregon Voters via ballot measure. Outdoor School is something that voters across Oregon, rural, urban, eastern, coast, valley, southern, gorge, central...all areas of the state support. We understand that Oregon faces big revenue reductions to the General Fund and we appreciate that lawmakers face difficult choices. HB 4112 restores \$6M in Lottery Funds so that we can stabilize Outdoor School programming 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.

Thank you,
Melynda Retallack