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TO: Oregon House Committee on Education

FR: Karin Wandtke

DA: February 10, 2026

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 Karin Wandtke 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 through hands-on, in-person learning in our increasingly digitized society has never been more important. Outdoor school enhances students' connection to nature, promotes physical activity and provides hands-on experiential learning.

I attended Outdoor School in the sixth grade and volunteered while in high-school and it impacted **my** life in important ways. Far beyond the science, nature and outdoor learning, it also fosters critical thinking, creativity and social skills. Outdoor School fosters leadership development and independence. This type of experience helps develop self-reliance and other skills that serve youth well in many settings. The leadership skills I began to develop in my experience at Outdoor School directly led to my work during college at a youth camp, was the start of my leadership training that has been at the core of every job I have held since, and has framed how I volunteer in the community.

Even more impactful, my step-daughter, who has a diagnosis of ADHD, also attended Outdoor School in the sixth grade at a time when her learning challenges were significantly impacting her confidence, self-esteem and desire to learn. The hands-on learning at Outdoor School fit perfectly with her learning needs putting her in the position to help other students in group activities, boosting her confidence and changing her outlook on her ability to succeed in school. She recently graduated from college and the confidence she gained at Outdoor School during a critical time in her development, was a key tool in her academic success.

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, coast, valley, southern, gorge, central...all areas of the state, deeply support. We understand that Oregon faces significant revenue reductions to the General Fund and we appreciate that lawmakers face difficult choices. HB 4112 would restore \$6M in Lottery Funds 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.