

Submitter:

Lori Leach

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4112

Subject: Please Support HB 4112 to Restore Outdoor School Funding

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

Thank you for your continued service to our state. Each day, you face complex financial and policy decisions—especially during these challenging times—and I am truly grateful for your dedication to Oregon’s people and future.

I am writing to urge you to vote YES on HB 4112, restoring to the Outdoor School (ODS) 2026 budget at least a portion of the funds diverted from its 2025 appropriation.

As a sixth grader, I attended Outdoor School, and it made a lasting impression on me. That experience sparked my deep love of the outdoors and taught me a lifelong respect for Oregon’s environment. It instilled values that shaped who I am today—values I now carry forward through my current work in native species restoration and conservation.

Outdoor School gives every Oregon child—regardless of background or academic ability—the chance to grow in ways no traditional classroom can fully provide. While a child may wrestle with fractions or grammar during the school year, they can discover new confidence in the outdoors, studying stream life, or learning teamwork around a campfire. These moments build independence, resilience, cooperation, and curiosity—qualities that stay with them for life.

My children attended outdoor school and loved every minute. For many of their classmates, this was the first time they’d experienced nature and the outdoors in an educational way, and for some, the first time to explore nature outside of their own community.

ODS is more than a program; it’s a reflection of Oregon’s identity and tradition. From the Bottle Bill to the Beach Bill, Oregon has long stood as a leader in protecting and celebrating our natural environment. When Oregonians voted for “Outdoor School for All,” we affirmed a shared belief that every child deserves access to the wonders of our state’s landscapes and the lessons they teach.

By passing HB 4112, you will continue this legacy—empowering Oregon’s children to understand their place in our communities and our ecosystems while nurturing the next generation of environmental stewards.

Thank you again for your time, service, and leadership on behalf of Oregon’s future. I urge you to support HB 4112 and restore Outdoor School’s critical Lottery funding for 2026.

With gratitude,

Lori Leach

Donald, Oregon