



Ascension School

Camp & Conference Center

Chair Hudson, Vice-chair McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

Ascension School Camp and Conference Center provides Outdoor School to approximately 130 students per year – from six small, rural schools. We serve students from Eastern Oregon across several counties. Our program teaches students about the importance of a healthy watershed. This includes instruction on agriculture, water quality, macro-invertebrates and riparian zones. We are a unique program in that our educators are trained in tribal history/shared history. We have Indigenous educators and introduce students to Indigenous land management practices through our habitat restoration project.

After the recent cuts, we were able to continue offering our program only by making unfortunate cuts to our curriculum. In the past we took students to local farms on “field trips” to learn straight from the farm about healthy practices in the watershed. We have removed this portion of our programming because we can no longer pay these farmers for their time and access to their farms. We have also eliminated several educational components to save funds. We want a robust and complete program. Lack of funding impacts our ability to offer one.

We understand this is a very difficult budget environment. Oregon voters overwhelmingly passed Ballot Measure 99 in 2016. **Outdoor School is a foundational Oregonian experience.** We greatly fear what will happen if there are additional cuts. The small schools and rural students that we serve are especially at risk of losing access to this experience. **We support full, voter-approved Outdoor School funding, including restoration of \$6 million in 2026.**

Thank you,

Amy Jayne

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