

11 February 2026

House Committee in Education
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Hudson, Co-chairs Dobson & McIntire, and Committee Members:

Twice in the last week, I attempted to give oral testimony to the legislative committees, but (sadly) I was not selected. Please see below for the testimony I wanted to share. And if you have questions or need more information, please contact me.

Thanks,

Susan

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Susan Salafsky, Ph.D. (she)
Ecologist

Program Coordinator
500 Women Scientists Corvallis

Certified K-12 Substitute Teacher (Dr. S)
Corvallis & Albany School Districts & Waldorf

Outdoor School Instructor (Pika)
Coyle Outside

HB 4112 TESTIMONY 11 FEBRUARY 2026

Members of the Committee, thank you for your service and attention.

I'm Dr. Susan Salafsky; I have a doctorate in Ecology. I reside in Corvallis.

I have been a Certified K-12 Substitute Teacher in Corvallis & Albany School Districts for 6 years.

And an Outdoor School (ODS) Instructor for 3 years.

In my work, I have taught students how to use Owl Eyes (i.e., peripheral vision), Deer Ears (i.e., hand-cupped ears to amplify sound waves), and other senses, so they can get to know their surroundings.

We practice these skills outdoors, while sitting apart, quiet, and still; before sharing what was seen, heard, and felt.

Most students felt calm, peaceful, relaxed, happy, and comfortable.

And scientific research confirms what the students are sensing. The benefits of paying attention to nature include lower heart rate and production of stress hormones, and increased memory retention and contentment. (Try it!)

Furthermore, by paying attention to the outdoors, students are exposed to TRUTH; that is, what their senses tell them about our shared environment, themselves, and each other.

Thus, if we increase access to outdoor learning, we can enhance curiosity, empathy, creativity, and collaboration.

So, I am here today to ask you to: 1) Ensure the voter-approved lottery funds are used for their intended purpose, 2) Support HB 4112 to restore \$6 million for ODS this biennium, 2) Avoid future cuts to & ideally increase earmarked funding so all OR middle school students can attend ODS.

Because your soon-to-be voting constituents are also our future.

Don't you want the best possible one?!!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Susan Salafsky, Ph.D.