

# Support Outdoor School Legislation - SB 439 and HB 2648

## Goal of SB 439 and HB 2648:

To create opportunities for every Oregon 5th or 6th grade student to experience the world through hands-on field study and natural science-focused activities at an Outdoor School program, to better understand the place they live, and to discover their opportunities and responsibilities as citizens.

## What is Outdoor School?

Oregon's outdoor school programs are a proud Oregon tradition dating back to the late 1950s and have been experienced by over 1 million Oregonians. But today only around half of Oregon students get to participate in the program. Outdoor school at its most effective is a week long, residential field science program for 5th or 6th graders that:

- Gives students an opportunity to study natural sciences hands-on and collaboratively resulting in improved scores on standardized tests, especially in STEM fields.
- Accessible to kids of all abilities and learning styles.
- Builds self-sufficiency and leadership skills.

## Oregon voters support Outdoor School:

- Two-thirds (64%) of Oregon voters support spending \$20 million a year to ensure all students get a chance to attend residential outdoor school programs
- 93% of Oregonians think it is important to get Oregon schoolchildren into programs that get them outdoors to learn about science and the environment.
  - 67% of Oregonians think it is “extremely important” or “very important.”

## Senate Bill 439 and House Bill 2648

- The bills establish a state Outdoor Education Fund, set criteria for eligible programs, designate Oregon State University Extension Service as the administrative agency, and seek \$22 million per year to support the program.
- The \$22 million would cover administrative, program fees, transportation, tuition, room and board to send all Oregon fifth or sixth-grade student (approximately 50,000 students) to a full week (5 nights/6 days) of Outdoor School or a comparable outdoor education experience reflecting local needs.
- Bill Sponsors: Sen. Arnie Roblan, D-Coos Bay; Sen. Chuck Thomsen, R-Hood River; Rep. Betty Komp, D-Woodburn; Rep. Sherrie Sprenger, R-Scio

## Proposed funding mechanisms under consideration (General Fund is current placeholder):

- **Solid Waste Fee:** \$22 million per year from a fee imposed on all disposal sites that receive domestic solid waste through a \$4.40 increase in the tipping fee.
- **Unclaimed Bottle Deposit Funds:** In 2017, the sources of funds for the Outdoor Education Fund will be a portion of unclaimed returnable bottle deposits currently retained by beverage distributors in an amount not to exceed \$22 million per year. Per legislation passed in 2013, the current five-cent deposit will increase to 10-cents per container and more containers will be included in the system.

**For more information, please contact:**

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