

February 1, 2019

Staff  
Senator  
Senator Address

Dear [staff]:

We, the undersigned members and friends of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK), urge you to support the Every Kid Outdoors Act (EKO), which is included as part of S. 47. This legislation would codify the popular Every Kid in a Park (EKIP) program that supports opportunities for fourth graders and their families to connect with our parks and public lands, at a time when fewer and fewer children are experiencing America's great outdoors.

EKO passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support and was reported out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in the last Congress. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored the bill at no cost, making it a fiscally responsible legislation. It is imperative that the Senate make passing EKO a priority.

In the program's first year, more than two million fourth graders downloaded the EKIP pass. In addition, during the first two years, nearly \$5 million in private funding was leveraged to support transportation costs for children from low-income schools across America. Many governors appreciate the long-term potential of the program in creating new supporters of parks and are accepting the EKIP passes in their own state park systems. Nevada took it a step further and passed a law to give free entry to all state parks for fifth graders.

OAK is a national strategic partnership of nearly 100 businesses and organizations representing more than 60 million Americans with the purpose of advocating for children and youth to have opportunities to experience the outdoors. Members of OAK have contributed significantly to EKIP's success by providing transportation grants and delivering high quality programming to kids, many of whom are visiting a public park for the first time.

Today's young people are spending less time outdoors than any generation. Yet, America's parks drive an \$887 billion economy, supporting more than seven million jobs across our nation. Outdoor recreation generates nearly \$125 billion in tax revenue and our outdoor economy depends on kids and families accessing natural areas to hike, camp, and fish.

As children spend less time outdoors, they are become more sedentary, which contributes to the chronic disease and childhood obesity crisis. In addition, more than 20 percent, or \$190.2 billion, of annual medical spending in the United States is on health care costs of obesity-related illness. Childhood obesity alone costs our country \$14 billion in direct medical expenses.

EKO is a cost-effective, common sense way to improve children's health, support long-term economic investment, and introduce a new generation to the beauty and wonder of America's public lands, waters, and shores. We urge you to support the Every Kid Outdoors Act in the Senate and make connecting our nation's fourth graders and supporting their health a priority.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Advocates for Better Children's Diets  
AEOE (California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education)  
Alliance for Childhood  
American Camp Association  
American Council on Exercise  
American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
American Hiking Society  
American Horticultural Society  
American Public Health Association  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Avid4 Adventure  
Big City Mountaineers  
Blue Star Families  
California Invasive Plant Council  
California State Parks Foundation  
Camp Ocean Pines  
ChangeScale  
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education  
Doctors for America  
Education Outside  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
GirlTrek  
Green Schoolyards America  
Groundwork Richmond  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
Latino Outdoors  
Lawrence Hall of Science  
Michael O. D. Brown We Love Our Sons & Daughters Foundation  
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity  
National Interscholastic Cycling Association  
National Park Trust  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National WIC Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
O'Neill Sea Odyssey  
Outdoor Outreach  
Outdoors Empowered Network  
Pathfinder Ranch  
Positively Nourished, LLC  
REI  
Rhode Island Environmental Education Association  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
Save the Redwoods League  
Seed Your Future  
Sierra Club  
Ten Strands  
Texas State Alliance of YMCAs  
The American Society of Landscape Architects  
The Corps Network  
The Food Trust  
The Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp  
The North Face  
The Watershed Project  
The Wildlands Conservancy  
Washington Trails Association  
Wilderness Inquiry  
Wyoming Alliance for Environmental Education  
YMCA of San Francisco  
Youth Outside