



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

20
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: March 12, 2024

Title of Item: Letter of Support for LCCMR proposal from the 5 RELCs

<input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*
Submitted by: Dave McMillan		Department: LLCC
Presenter (Name and Title):		Estimated Time Needed:
Summary of Issue: <p>Minnesota's five accredited residential environmental learning center's (RELCs) have a proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources to provide financial aid to students attending multi-day environmental education experiences at these centers. Request is for \$5,200,000 to provide financial assistance for student tuition fees and teacher stipends. This is a continuation of the current ENRTF grant that the RELCs currently have. Dollars would be split between the RELCs over 3 years.</p> <p>Each eligible school will have a financial assistance application that a school will fill out and submit. It will vary based on each request what the amount funded is for each school based on the school's requested need, and funds available. Eligible schools need to show a clear financial need through the application process that could include, but is not limited to, determination via percentages of free and reduced-priced lunch program students.</p> <p>This grant would be a backup if the Outdoor School For All legislation fails to pass, passes without funding, or as a supplement if Outdoor School For All passes but is only partially funded.</p>		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Sign letter of support for LCCMR proposal from the 5 RELCs.		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		



AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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March 12, 2024

Dear LCCMR Staff and Members:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm Aitkin County's support for Minnesota's five accredited residential environmental learning center's (RELCs) proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources to provide financial aid to students attending multi-day environmental education experiences at these centers.

For over 50 years, Minnesota's RELCs have been a valued and trusted partner to Minnesota's education system. Annually, over 600 schools (30,000 K-12 students) from 60 Minnesota counties attend our five accredited sites: Deep Portage Learning Center, Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, Long Lake Conservation Center, Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (formerly Audubon Center of the North Woods), and Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center.

By offering financial aid to more than 15,000 students who need support, the RELCs will provide meaningful hands-on outdoor experiences to students who otherwise would not have that opportunity. The total immersion a student receives by attending a multi-day outdoor learning experience helps Minnesota achieve the LCCMR goals of public protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources. Every student experience will include courses that are directly focused upon learning outcomes of the LCCMR strategic goals for developing skills and knowledge in Outdoor Recreation and Open Space; Air and Energy; Water; and Habitat, Fish, and Wildlife.

Long Lake Conservation Center supports the joint proposal from Minnesota's RELCs to provide scholarships to qualifying schools/students across Minnesota. Immersing students in multi-day outdoor experiences helps to build an environmentally literate citizenry for the future while giving students a positive outdoor experience as a youth.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this funding request.

Sincerely,

J. Mark Wedel
County Board Chair