



## OSPREY WILDS • CHARTER SCHOOL DIVISION

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The authorizing mission of Osprey Wilds is to ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for Minnesota students through effective charter school authorizing.

March 11, 2025

Senator Steve Cwudzinski, Chair  
Minnesota Senate Education Policy Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
95 University Avenue West  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Letter of Support for SF No. 1311

Dear Chair Cwudzinski and Members of the Senate Education Policy Committee,

On behalf of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center (Osprey Wilds or OW), a charter school authorizer approved by the Minnesota Department of Education, I write to express our support for key provisions in SF No. 1311, which advance accountability, transparency, and effective governance in Minnesota's charter school sector. As an authorizer committed to ensuring high-quality educational opportunities, Osprey Wilds believe these provisions will strengthen oversight while maintaining the autonomy and flexibility that make charter schools unique.

Osprey Wilds supports the following provisions and urge the committee to advance these measures:

- **Additional Authorizer Training** (124E.05, Subd. 2)  
Osprey Wilds supports the expansion of authorizer training requirements to include each authorizer's performance review findings as well as the requirement for annual department-approved training. Strong authorizing is essential for maintaining quality charter schools, and continued professional development will help align best practices across the state and ensure that staff are well-equipped to fulfill their oversight responsibilities. Training will provide consistency in evaluating school performance, financial oversight, and legal compliance, benefiting both schools and authorizers.
- **Strengthening Board Member Conflict of Interest Provisions** (124E.07, Subd. 3)  
Osprey Wilds supports the strengthened conflict of interest provisions that ensure charter school boards operate independently and without undue influence. Board governance plays a critical role in school success, and these updates will enhance accountability by preventing financial and operational conflicts of interest between and among charter school boards. Establishing a clear consequence for violations—making board members who violate conflict of interest rules ineligible to serve or be reappointed for 24 months—creates a strong deterrent against unethical practices and reinforces the integrity of charter school leadership.
- **Requirement for Finance Committees in Charter School Boards** (124E.07, Subd. 6)  
Osprey Wilds supports the requirement for charter school boards to establish a finance committee that meets regularly and includes at least one board member. Strong financial oversight is critical to the long-term sustainability of charter schools, and this requirement aligns with best practices in nonprofit governance. Regular financial reviews help schools proactively identify risks, improve budget planning, and strengthen internal controls, reducing the likelihood

of financial mismanagement. By formalizing this practice, SF No. 1311 enhances fiscal responsibility and transparency, ensuring that charter schools remain financially stable and accountable to their stakeholders.

- **Clarifying Conflict of Interest Rules for Affiliated Building Companies** (124E.13, Subd. 3)  
Osprey Wilds supports additional safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest in affiliated nonprofit building corporations that lease facilities to charter schools. By clearly defining board membership restrictions and prohibiting contractors from serving on these boards, the amendment will help prevent self-dealing and ensure these entities operate in the best interest of schools and taxpayers.
- **Increased Transparency in Authorizer Reporting Requirements** (124E.17)  
Osprey Wilds supports requiring authorizers to publicly post charter contracts, amendments, school performance evaluations, and notices of corrective action. These transparency measures will increase public accountability and allow stakeholders—including families, policymakers, and community members—to better understand school performance and authorizer decisions.
- **Increased Transparency for Charter Schools on Corrective Actions** (124E.17)  
Osprey Wilds supports the requirement for charter schools to share information about interventions, corrective actions, and probationary status with their stakeholders. Transparency in these areas is essential for maintaining trust among parents, staff, and the broader school community. Ensuring that families and educators are fully informed about a school's standing allows for greater engagement, collaboration, and timely intervention to address challenges. By making this information readily available, schools can foster a culture of accountability and demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement.
- **Clarifying Authorizer Financial Reporting Requirements** (124E.17)  
Osprey Wilds supports increased clarity in the financial statements that authorizers must publish, ensuring greater consistency and transparency regarding authorizer income and expenditures related to charter school oversight. This will help demonstrate responsible use of authorizer fees and provide clarity on how authorizers fulfill their responsibilities.

Many of the provisions in SF No. 1311 align with best practices in charter school oversight and promote stronger governance, fiscal accountability, and public transparency. These changes will benefit both charter schools and the families they serve while upholding the public trust in Minnesota's charter sector.

Osprey Wilds appreciates the committee's consideration of this important legislation and urge you to support these provisions in SF No. 1311. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information or insights.

Sincerely,



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