

April 3, 2014

Dear Senator Pete Kelly,

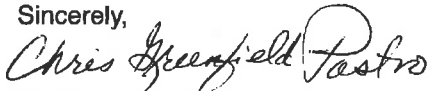
I am writing in support of BAKLAP completion funding via a capital budget appropriation. I am a middle school teacher in Fairbanks, Alaska. Today and yesterday I took my classes outside to begin the "Tapping Into Spring" project sponsored by the OneTree BAKLAP program. Before leaving the classroom, students made clinometers and discussed the significance of the 45/45/90 degree triangle. Then, students donned snowshoes and took a jaunt to the back corner of our school property to choose a tree for tapping this spring. Students estimated the height of the tree using the clinometer. They took DBH measurements (diameter at breast height) and sketched the tree. They also wrote descriptions of the tree. OneTree BAKLAP scientist, Zac Meyers, demonstrated how to take a core sample and how to use the laser clinometer! Students were taking basic measurements that foresters use in the field! All students were engaged and working in teams. Our learning targets were accomplished. It was a memorable hour of "hands-on" learning. But the learning will not stop here. It is a springboard for science and natural resource education for each of these students.

This is just one example of the quality educational experiences I have been lucky to share with my students through the BAKLAP program. My students currently have 39 birch seedlings growing in the classroom. They have been observing the trees as they came out of dormancy and designed an experiment with the seedlings. Their experiment focuses on changes in growth using three different watering treatments. OneTree BAKLAP scientist Jan Dawe guided students as they determined variables, demonstrated measurement and data collection protocols, and discussed phenology and climate change issues. The results have been stunning. The three water treatments yielded very interesting results! Students are in the final steps of sharing their findings.

These experiences give my students a real connection to the boreal forest. They conduct real research! They use inquiry and connect with scientists who are working with natural resources and biomass energy research.

I understand the many financial challenges you are facing in legislative funding. However, I urge you to support BAKLAP completion funding. I have seen the difference it can make in the most valuable resource we have—our children. Thank you for your consideration. With the completion funding via a capital budget appropriation, I hope future students will be able to have authentic science and natural resources learning experiences that BAKLAP can help provide.

Sincerely,



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