

April 11, 2023

VOTE EXPLANATION FOR “NO” VOTES ON MULTIPLE MOTIONS
TO WITHDRAW SB 653 and SB 665 FROM COMMITTEES

I would like to thank my Republican colleagues for calling out, in comments on their April 11 motions to withdraw SB 653 and SB 665 from committee, the vital need to reduce wildfire risk with more effective management of forest fuels. I strongly support that goal. .

I opposed their motions for the same reason that I expressed to some of them when those bills were referred to the Senate Natural Resources Committee. *The activities they are advocating are the exact purpose of [SB 762, Section 18](#)* (page 10), entitled REDUCTION OF WILDFIRE RISK. SB 762 became law in the 2021 legislative session.

I specifically ask them to review Section 18 (3). There they will find the mandate for a rigorous process, involving a broad range of stakeholders around the state, for determining the best and most cost-effective plan for optimizing forest-based risk reduction *with however much funding we can secure for that purpose*.

Section 18 (2) directs ODF to “develop a 20-year strategic plan...that prioritizes restoration actions and geographies for wildfire risk reduction. The plan must be able to be used to direct federal, state and private investments in a tangible way.” That plan has now been developed, again through a rigorous stakeholder process with citizen input. It is the best possible blueprint for guiding investment of our limited resources in a way that gives our state the biggest bang for the buck over the next twenty years.

My colleagues’ unmistakable passion for wildfire risk reduction gives me hope that they’ll join me in advocating for increases in ODFW and OSFM budgets to meaningfully implement the activities laid out in this carefully-crafted 20-year plan. Diverting funds to activities that have NOT received this rigorous level of analysis—for example, dividing an appropriation in equal amounts to ten different counties—strikes me as a much less strategic and responsible approach.

I am sharing this vote explanation with colleagues who spoke for bill withdrawal as an invitation to join me in asking for more SB 762-related funding in this session’s budget process.

Respectfully,
Sen. Jeff Golden
Oregon Senate District 3

