

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 15



OREGON STATE SENATE

April 23, 2025

Obadiah Rutledge - Secretary of the Senate
RE: Vote Explanation for Senate Bill 926A

Dear Secretary Rutledge,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my vote explanation for Senate Bill 926A.

While the stories of lives and livelihoods destroyed by wildfire are devastating to hear, I fear SB 926A is not the answer that Oregonians seek. I did not support SB 926A due to concerns about its potential unintended consequences for Oregon ratepayers, the state's clean energy and energy system stability goals, and the limited policy discussion the bill received in committee. I spoke with Oregon's Citizen Utility Board and the PUC at great length.

While addressing utility accountability is important, the bill introduces financial risks that could significantly impact utilities' ability to invest in clean energy infrastructure, transmission upgrades, and wildfire mitigation, which include the work that our utility tree trimmers are doing every day across Oregon, these investments that are essential to meeting Oregon's energy and climate objectives. Consumers will also most-likely experience more rolling blackouts, due to the utility companies siding on caution with the slightest risk of wildfire.

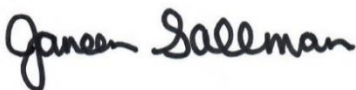
Wildfire risk is already contributing to delays in clean energy development. Additional financial uncertainty could further discourage the capital investment needed to maintain reliable service, expand renewable generation, and support economic growth. Strong utility balance sheets are essential to advancing the scale of projects required for Oregon's energy transition.

SB 926A also raises the risk of utility insolvency in the event of a major judgment, due to the bill's new restrictions on cost recovery and financing. In such cases, decision-making authority could shift from Oregon's regulatory bodies to bankruptcy courts, potentially disrupting infrastructure development, reducing local oversight and raising utility rates.

From a process standpoint, the bill was significantly amended late in the session and moved quickly through committee. Given its potential impacts, more deliberation and stakeholder input would have been appropriate. I believe the conversation around this important bill was limited due to time constraints, and there may be unintended consequences as a result. It's important to note that my vote against this bill is not a rejection of accountability or ignorance to a call to action for those impacted by wildfire, but rather, it reflects the need for a comprehensive policy approach that balances public safety, ratepayer protection, and long-term energy reliability.

For these reasons I voted no on Senate Bill 926A

Thank you,



Senator Janeen Sollman - Senate District 15

900 Court St. NE., Salem, OR 97301- 503-986-1715
sen.janeensollman@oregonlegislature.gov