



## Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners

Brad Little, Governor and President of the Board  
Phil McGrane, Secretary of State  
Raúl R. Labrador, Attorney General  
Brandon D Woolf, State Controller  
Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Dustin T. Miller, Secretary to the Board

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*Be it remembered that the following proceedings were had and done by the State Board of Land Commissioners of the State of Idaho, created by Section Seven (7) of Article Nine (IX) of the Constitution.*

### Draft Minutes

State Board of Land Commissioners Regular Meeting  
December 16, 2025

The regular meeting of the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at the State Capitol, Lincoln Auditorium (WW02), Lower Level, West Wing, 700 W. Jefferson St., Boise, Idaho, and via webinar. The meeting began at 8:59 a.m. The Honorable Governor Brad Little presided. The following members were in attendance:

Honorable Governor Brad Little  
Honorable Secretary of State Phil McGrane  
Honorable Attorney General Raúl Labrador  
Honorable State Controller Brandon Woolf  
Honorable Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield

All Land Board members were present at the physical location.

### Reports

1. Department Reports—presented by Dustin Miller, Director
  - A. Timber Sales Revenue—November 2025
  - B. Leases/Permits Transactions and Revenue—November 2025

Discussion: Secretary of State McGrane thanked staff for including the fire salvage timber sales information this year and observed that, compared to the prior year, the figures appeared to have roughly doubled. He acknowledged that acreage levels are outside the Department's control and agreed with staff's overall assessment that the impact was minimal.

Governor Little asked about the reported sawlog volume, noting that it was approximately 53% of sawlog volume year-to-date and below expected harvest levels. He wondered if the lower volume reflected timber sold that had not yet been

harvested due to market conditions and whether the 53% figure was typical for this time of year. Director Miller responded that market conditions were influencing harvest activity. He explained that while the Department had sold more than 175 million board feet of volume for FY2026, purchasers typically have a two-to-five-year window to harvest timber. As a result, a significant portion of sold volume remains "on the stump," with interest accruing annually, and current harvest figures lag expectations due to market factors rather than a lack of sales.

Controller Woolf thanked staff for responding to the Secretary of State's earlier request and suggested that, as more data becomes available, a year-over-year comparison could be helpful. He inquired about the reported losses by size class, specifically if the dollar values associated with pole, sapling, and seedling losses reflected current value or projected future value if the timber had matured. Director Miller replied that the figures reflected current value, which was confirmed by staff present.

2. Endowment Fund Investment Board—presented by Chris Anton, EFIB Manager of Investments
  - A. Manager's Report
  - B. Investment Report

Discussion: Mr. Anton reported that the portfolio increased by 0.3% for the month and was up 6.2% fiscal year-to-date. He remarked that the month included significant market volatility, particularly early in the period, driven by concerns over the scale of investment in artificial intelligence infrastructure and uncertainty regarding how those investments will be monetized.

Mr. Anton communicated that technology stocks experienced a sell-off amid valuation concerns, but markets rebounded following strong earnings results from NVIDIA. He cautioned that valuations remain at historic highs, exceeding levels seen during the late-1990s technology boom, and advised continued monitoring. He also noted positive market reaction to the reopening of the federal government following a prolonged shutdown and the Federal Reserve's decision to reduce interest rates by 0.25%, bringing the target range to 3.5%–3.75%.

Mr. Anton reported that the Investment Board approved the hiring of a third international equity manager to reduce concentration risk. He said that international equities currently represent 17% of the portfolio and are split evenly between two managers, and that the Investment Board determined additional diversification was warranted. An international equity manager search is underway.

### **Consent—Action Item(s)**

3. Approval of Draft Minutes—November 18, 2025 Regular Meeting

**Consent Agenda Board Action:** A motion was made by Controller Woolf that the Land Board approve and adopt the Consent Agenda. Secretary of State McGrane seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

## Regular—Action Item(s)

4. Rulemaking Petition: Idaho Code § 38-1304(1)(f)—presented by Archie Gray, Bureau Chief-Forestry Assistance

Recommendation: The first recommendation is that the Land Board should encourage the state to continue to address forest health risks on federal and adjoining lands through the collaborative approach of Shared Stewardship and Good Neighbor Authority programs. The second recommendation is for the Department to not enter into rule promulgation related to 38-1304(1)(f) because there are already sufficient rules in place to allow for the timely application of salvage harvests by willing and able landowners. Also, the statute directs federal forest land managers to undertake salvage where feasible, making a rule redundant and subservient.

Discussion: Attorney General Labrador asked if representatives from the Farm Bureau were present; none were. He then expressed concern that choosing not to enter rulemaking could potentially violate statutory requirements. While acknowledging limits on state authority over federal actions, he stated that rulemaking could encourage participation in existing programs and more assertive engagement, without being overly prescriptive or conflicting with federal preemption. Mr. Gray agreed with the Attorney General's assessment.

Governor Little enquired about the timing of required negotiated rulemaking under zero-based regulation requirements, noting that all rules must undergo negotiated rulemaking on an eight-year cycle. He asked where this rule fell within that cycle and whether addressing one section independently would affect future comprehensive rulemaking. Mr. Gray replied that the Department completed its prior zero-based review in 2022 and estimated that the next cycle would likely begin in 2028. He was uncertain how addressing a single subsection would interact with broader future rulemaking, though he referenced prior instances where the Department focused on a specific section of rules due to scope and complexity.

Controller Woolf commented that if the motion involved expanding or adding a rule, the Land Board should aim to keep it concise, consistent with efforts to reduce regulatory burden. Governor Little clarified that his understanding was that the proposal would accelerate review of an existing rule rather than create a new one. Director Miller confirmed that interpretation.

Director Miller underscored the Department's current commitments under Shared Stewardship and Good Neighbor Authority initiatives, noting the importance of ensuring that rulemaking efforts do not divert excessive staff time from ongoing restoration and partnership work.

Governor Little asked if the motion specified negotiated rulemaking. Superintendent Critchfield said that the motion referenced scheduling rulemaking but did not explicitly state negotiated rulemaking. Legal counsel indicated that negotiated rulemaking would be inferred as appropriate and determined by the Department.

Secretary of State McGrane inquired whether a recently announced Shared Stewardship agreement affected the proposal. Governor Little explained that the agreement was largely an extension of an earlier Shared Stewardship effort and noted the expanded scale of current initiatives.

Director Miller reiterated the Department's commitment to strengthening partnerships and increasing the pace and scale of restoration work, underscoring the need to balance those efforts with any rulemaking obligations.

Board Action: A motion was made by Superintendent Critchfield that the Land Board request the Department to work with the Division of Financial Management (DFM) to appropriately schedule rulemaking to address the statutory requirements found in Idaho Code § 38-1304(1)(f). The rulemaking should be limited specifically to Idaho Code § 38-1304(1)(f) and recognize and include the Shared Stewardship agreements the State of Idaho has established with the federal government. Secretary of State McGrane seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

5. Fire Strategic Plan—presented by Dustin Miller, Director

Recommendation: Approve the Strategic Plan for Managing Wildland Fire for the Department's use in guiding the future of the wildland fire program.

Discussion: Controller Woolf suggested including a formal review schedule in the plan, similar to other Department policies, to clarify how often the plan would be revisited and updated. Controller Woolf also solicited clarification regarding references to future financial needs in the plan, noting that the document included projections of funding needs in future fiscal years. He requested that the record reflect that the Land Board was not approving future funding requests through adoption of the plan.

Director Miller clarified that the financial figures included in the appendix represent future needs and potential budget requests, which would be brought to the Land Board through the normal budget process for approval. He emphasized that adoption of the plan did not authorize funding increases. He also referenced recent legislation supported by the Land Board related to fire preparedness and revisions to Idaho Code § 38-111, which would be addressed during the upcoming legislative session.

Controller Woolf thought the clarification was helpful and provided important context for both Land Board oversight and future budget discussions.

Board Action: A motion was made by Controller Woolf that the Land Board approve the Strategic Plan for Managing Wildland Fire for the Department's use in guiding the future of the wildland fire program. Superintendent Critchfield seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

## Information

### 6. Endowment Ownership History—presented by Jim Elbin, Division Administrator-Trust Lands

Discussion: Governor Little asked why Utah received significantly more endowment land than Idaho. Mr. Elbin answered that allocations were based in part on land productivity, with states receiving additional sections where lands were more arid or less productive.

Attorney General Labrador enquired how many acres the endowment currently holds. Mr. Elbin answered that the Department manages approximately 2.5 million acres and offered to provide an exact figure.

Governor Little discussed the importance of evaluating land based on value rather than acreage alone, noting that inaccessible or non-productive acres do not generate income. He cited historical land exchanges and sales, including Capitol Endowment lands sold to finance construction of the State Capitol, and pointed out that simple acreage comparisons do not reflect economic reality. Mr. Elbin agreed and noted that consolidation efforts, exchanges, and acquisitions have improved management efficiency and economic returns. He stated he would research historical figures regarding lands exchanged versus sold.

Attorney General Labrador requested follow-up information on how many acres were conveyed to the federal government compared to those sold. Mr. Elbin agreed to provide that information.

Controller Woolf asked for context regarding railroad lands and their relationship to endowment lands. Mr. Elbin provided background on early timber sales and railroad rights-of-way, noting historical practices that later prompted statutory reforms.

Controller Woolf commented that the historical discussion was helpful in framing future policy conversations regarding land value, consolidation, access, and constitutional and statutory limits on land disposition.

### 7. Remote Sensing (LiDAR)—presented by Geoff Klein, Program Manager-Remote Sensing

Discussion: Superintendent Critchfield highlighted the broader implications of the presentation for workforce development and education. The presentation illustrated how technology is increasingly infused across industries, including natural resource management, and she underscored the importance of digital literacy for students. Superintendent Critchfield remarked that technology-enabled forestry careers demonstrate how technical skills can be applied in outdoor and resource-based professions. Mr. Klein acknowledged the Superintendent's comments and noted the Department's positive experience working with the University of Idaho, including collaboration with analysts who have contributed significantly to the program. He mentioned that the education partnership has been especially rewarding.

Controller Woolf questioned whether the Department coordinates with private industrial landowners—such as Hancock, Molpus, and others—that conduct their own LiDAR work, and if there are opportunities for partnership or shared learning given that some data may be proprietary. Mr. Klein explained that collaboration with both government entities and private timber companies is a core component of the program. He described the importance of calibration plots, noting that while these plots are expensive and have fixed costs, they provide a valuable opportunity for collaboration. He communicated that data collected across ownership boundaries can be incorporated into shared models, improving accuracy as additional plots are added. He further noted that the Department has partnered with companies such as Stimson and Potlatch-Deltic and continues to engage with industry partners on standards, modeling techniques, and habitat-specific methodologies. Mr. Klein emphasized that Idaho's varied forest conditions require different analytical approaches, particularly when modeling complex canopy structures.

Controller Woolf asked about opportunities to apply artificial intelligence (AI) to the Department's LiDAR and large spatial datasets. Mr. Klein responded that AI holds significant promise but also presents challenges, particularly when processing extremely large datasets measured in terabytes. He commented that AI capabilities are advancing rapidly and have already demonstrated improved performance in spatial statistical modeling. He stated that the Department is closely monitoring AI developments, particularly those that could improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance decision-making related to forest management.

Secretary of State McGrane thanked Mr. Klein for the presentation and said that he appreciated the emphasis on how data is actually used, rather than simply collected. He followed up on the discussion of AI and large datasets, stating his view that AI's strength lies in analyzing large volumes of information. He then wondered about the lifecycle of the LiDAR data, including how often it would be updated to reflect changes from wildfire, disease, harvesting, or natural growth.

Mr. Klein explained that the Department anticipates conducting refresh flights on approximately a five-year cycle. He mentioned that the refresh cycle is informed by forest growth patterns and allows the Department to observe how stands develop over time, particularly in highly productive endowment forests. He stated that the first round of refresh flights has already increased interest in future updates. Secretary of State McGrane asked if the refresh cycle was largely driven by cost considerations. Mr. Klein confirmed that cost is a primary factor and noted that LiDAR technology continues to evolve. He referenced emerging technologies, including alternative LiDAR sensors, which may reduce costs in the future and expand data collection capabilities.

Governor Little inquired if the Department coordinates with emergency services or the Department of Water Resources to use LiDAR data for wildfire risk assessment, particularly in the wildland-urban interface and for Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) projects. Mr. Klein replied that he had not yet coordinated with those entities but agreed that such coordination would be beneficial.

Governor Little stressed the importance of sharing LiDAR data with other agencies to maximize its value, particularly for wildfire risk mitigation. He asserted that leveraging the data across agencies could significantly increase the return on investment and encouraged staff to pursue those opportunities. Governor Little inquired where the LiDAR data is currently stored. Mr. Klein stated that the data is stored on Department servers located in Coeur d'Alene and Boise, with ongoing coordination with Information Technology Services (ITS) to further develop infrastructure.

Secretary of State McGrane queried whether the data is stored locally or in the cloud. Mr. Klein replied that the data is currently stored locally on servers and not in cloud-based systems, noting that cloud storage has been used in the past. Governor Little asked about data security. Mr. Klein said that he was not qualified to provide detailed information on security protocols and offered to follow up, noting that the data resides within the Department's network and follows standard ITS security practices.

Governor Little provided extended comments on the value of LiDAR for wildfire risk assessment, forest health, and fiduciary responsibility. He cited past examples where proactive forest management prevented catastrophic fires and contended that LiDAR allows the Department to be more responsive to biological conditions without relying solely on field crews. He stated that the technology represents a cost-effective investment given the value of the timber resource and noted that private industry has long used similar tools. Governor Little maintained that having accurate data strengthens the State's position in timber valuation and sales and requested future reporting on coordination with emergency services and other agencies.

Mr. Klein clarified cost estimates, noting that the cited per-acre costs reflected participation in federal programs and that typical acquisition costs are higher when scaled independently. He reiterated that even at higher costs, the investment remains cost-effective. He also discussed the broader potential for risk modeling and coordination with statewide LiDAR efforts, including work supported by the Idaho LiDAR Consortium. Governor Little concluded by reiterating his strong support for the program and its continued expansion.

#### 8. Logging Day with Constitutional Officers

Discussion: Superintendent Critchfield introduced a video highlighting a visit by several Land Board members to a logging operation near Council, Idaho. She explained that the purpose of the video was to showcase modern logging practices and technology.

Following the video, Governor Little commented on improvements in safety and efficiency in the logging industry, noting that technological advances have significantly reduced labor demands while increasing safety. He emphasized the importance of Idaho's timber industry and the partnerships between the Department, logging contractors, and timber families, contrasting Idaho's capacity with states that are lacking sawmill infrastructure. Director Miller thanked Superintendent Critchfield for the unique firsthand opportunity to take part in a modern logging operation.

## **Executive Session**

None

There being no further business before the Land Board, at 10:25 a.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Controller Woolf. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

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