

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M.
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 303
HELENA, MT**

Members Present

Kristen Juras, Lieutenant Governor
Susie Hedalen, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Austin Knudsen, Attorney General
James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance
Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State
Dawnell Fuller, Land Board Secretary

Members Absent

None

Testifying Staff

Erin Weisgerber, DNRC Deputy Director

Attachments

Related Materials, Attachment 1 – Sign-in-Sheet

Call to Order

00:00:01 Kristen Juras, Lieutenant Governor, called the meeting to order.

Adopt Proposed Agenda

00:00:45 Susie Hedalen, Superintendent of Public Instruction, moved to approve the February agenda. The motion was seconded by Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State, and carried unanimously.

Adopt Prior Months Meeting Minutes

00:01:09 Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State, moved to approve the January minutes. The motion was seconded by Susie Hedalen, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and carried unanimously.

Business Considered

0226-1 Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks: Habitat Conservation Leases

00:01:39 Erin Weisgerber, DNRC Deputy Director, gave an overview of the item.

Public Comment:

00:02:36 Christy Clark, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Director.

00:04:06 Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State, moved to approve item 0226-1. The motion was seconded by Susie Hedalen, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and carried unanimously.

Board Discussion/Comments: N/A

0226-2 Timber Sale: Sophie Lake

00:05:32 Erin Weisgerber, DNRC Deputy Director, gave an overview of the item.

Public Comment: N/A

00:06:31 Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State, moved to approve item 0226-2. The motion was seconded by Susie Hedalen, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and carried unanimously.

Board Discussion/Comments: N/A

0226-3 Easements

00:07:07 Erin Weisgerber, DNRC Deputy Director, gave an overview of the item.

Public Comment: N/A

00:07:56 Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State, moved to approve item 0226-3. The motion was seconded by James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, and carried unanimously.

Board Discussion/Comments: N/A

0226-4 Approval to File Objections on Water Rights (Executive Session)

00:08:28 Erin Weisgerber, DNRC Deputy Director, gave an overview of the item.

Public Comment: N/A

The Land Board assembled into executive session at 9:11 A.M. pursuant to MCA 2-3-203(4), to discuss litigation strategy. The public portion of the meeting resumed at 9:37 A.M.

00:10:04 James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, moved to approve item 0226-4. The motion was seconded by Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State, and carried 4-1.

Board Discussion/Comments: N/A

0226-5 Bison Grazing Proposals (Executive Session)

00:10:43 Kristen Juras, Lieutenant Governor, gave an overview of the item.

Public Comment: N/A

The Land Board assembled into executive session at 9:39 A.M. pursuant to MCA 2-3-203(4), to discuss litigation strategy. The public portion of the meeting resumed at 10:18 A.M.

00:12:21 James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, moved that DNRC review existing legal authorities and develop a rulemaking package on grazing lease stocking rates, including the current omission of bison, and that DNRC neither authorize any new or pending bison grazing requests nor allow APR to turn bison out on the lease.

00:016:38 The motion was seconded by Austin Knudsen, Attorney General, and carried unanimously.

These summary minutes and the audio recording are a draft record and will become official upon Land Board approval at the next meeting.

Board Discussion/Comments: N/A

00:17:09 Austin Knudsen, Attorney General, made a motion that DNRC develop and propose a policy, for consideration at the April meeting, that favors issuing grazing leases on state trust lands to production livestock operations over non-production operations, while honoring the fiduciary obligations of the Land Board and the agency.

00:18:02 The motion was seconded by James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, and carried unanimously.

Board Discussion/Comments: N/A

00:18:37 James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, made a motion for the Montana Land Board to place the topic of updating its current Land Exchange Policy along with any other appropriate action relating to the Land Exchange Policy on the agenda for the regularly scheduled May meeting.

00:19:20 The motion was seconded by Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State.

Board Discussion/Comments:

00:19:25 James Brown, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance.

00:21:00 The motion was approved and carried unanimously.

General Public Comment: N/A

Adjournment

00:21:22 Adjournment

PRESIDENT

ATTEST

/s/ Greg Gianforte Date: 03/16/2026
Greg Gianforte, Governor

/s/ Amanda Kaster Date: 03/16/2026
Amanda Kaster, DNRC Director

Please note: *The Land Board has adopted the audio recording of its meetings as the official record, as allowed by [2-3-212, MCA](#). These minutes provide an abbreviated summary of the Land Board discussion, public testimony, action taken, and other activities. The time designations listed are approximate and may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio recording of this meeting. You may access the minutes and the audio recording on our website: <https://dnrc.mt.gov/TrustLand/About/LandBoardMeetingArchive>.*

