



Payette Endowment Lands Alliance, Inc.

PO Box 2351

McCall, ID 83638

pelamccall@gmail.com

December 14, 2020

Board of Directors

Lea Albright

Judy Anderson

Jeff Canfield

Melissa Coriell

Debbie Fereday

Jenn Gray

Julie Manning

Jeffrey Mousseau

Amy Rush-Baker

COL(R) Douglas Smith

Dr. Darby Webb

Dr. Thomas Welty

Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners
300 N. 6th St., Suite 103
Boise, ID 83702

Dear Governor and Commissioners:

This letter regards Item #7 on the Final Agenda for the December 15, 2020 Land Board meeting and the draft Payette Endowment Lands Strategy to be presented at that meeting ("Lands Strategy").

When looking at the Lands Strategy plan what stands out to us is not the questions it answers, but rather two questions, in particular, that it does not address. Foremost among the missing issues is that there is no mention of the importance of the protection of the health of the ecosystem, the watershed, or the lake, not only to the ultimate value of the "assets" themselves but to the life of our community. The degradation of that ecosystem-- whether through overdevelopment, misguided land use planning, or management practices that do not take into account the realities of the 21st century- would result in an irredeemable loss for all of us, the community, the land, our school system, and the beneficiaries. All the lands in the McCall area would be greatly reduced in value if the lake were to become degraded. Therefore, it is essential to protect Payette Lake and its watershed, and this should be a foundation of the "Lands Strategy".

Secondly, we are confused by the many references to needing more cooperation with local entities regarding transition plans without offering a mechanism to facilitate this. We are concerned with ensuring that the IDL's suggested "facilitated discussions with stakeholders to establish coordination and cooperation" as outlined in strategies for Tier I and Tier II should be a sincere, long-term effort to engage the community in decisions that ultimately affect their lives, drinking water, economy, and the health of their ecosystems.

The Lands Strategy plan says that IDL would like to work "with stakeholders to establish coordination and cooperation within constitutional limitations and mandates" and "to review proposed strategies and garner feedback". To

accomplish this, PELA proposes that an advisory committee should be established that is comprised of IDL staff and stakeholders.

An advisory committee would enhance planning and management in four material ways:

1. **Minimize conflict:** The state endowment trusts benefit when conflict is minimized by involving local communities in the planning and management decisions of neighboring endowment lands.
2. **Add value to endowment lands:** High-quality land use planning adds value to trust assets and provides some predictability and stabilization for future planning.
3. **Consider impacts:** A committee could devise ways to provide value and revenues to endowment beneficiaries with consideration of community impacts.
4. **Recognize additional values:** Recreation, conservation, and other non-development values on endowment lands would significantly enhance property values, thereby increasing the tax revenues available for school districts and local economies.

The proposed Payette Lands Strategy Advisory Committee would be well served by including participation from the City of McCall, Valley County, large adjacent landowners such as the state park system and Payette National Forest, the sewer district (PLRWSD), Big Payette Water Quality Council, and local conservation groups to weigh in on the endowment lands located within their community. By including these affected community stakeholders in the planning stages, an advisory committee for the McCall area would minimize conflict and yield a robust plan that could garner wide acceptance and offer the needed protection to our watershed.

In sum, PELA advocates amending the Lands Strategy plan so that it rests on two foundational bases: (1) the paramount importance of Payette Lake as a basis for planning and managing the endowment lands in the McCall area and (2) the formation and implementation of an advisory group to support and cooperate with the IDL's planning, and we respectfully request that the Land Board direct the IDL to establish this Payette Lands Strategy Advisory Committee.

Yours truly,

PAYETTE ENDOWMENT LANDS ALLIANCE
Debbie Fereday, President

