Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of University and School Lands July 17, 2025

The July 17, 2025, meeting of the Board of University and School Lands was called to order at 9:03 AM by Chairman Governor Armstrong, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited and roll call was taken.

Members Present:

Michael Howe Secretary of State

Kirsten Baesler Superintendent of Public Instruction

Thomas Beadle Treasurer Kelly Armstrong Governor

Drew Wrigley Attorney General

Department of Trust Lands Personnel Present:

Joseph Heringer Commissioner

Catelin Newell Director of Admin Svcs & IT

Kate Schirado Executive Assistant

Rick Owings Administrative Staff Officer
Frank Mihail Chief Investment Officer

Elvedina Papalichev Paralegal

Adam Otteson Revenue Compliance Division Director

Susan Sommerfeld Unclaimed Property Director

Peggy Gudvangen Finance Director
Shaun Campbell Investments Officer
Scott Giere Revenue Compliance
Emily Bosch Unclaimed Property

Amanda Parent Minerals Management Officer

Ryan Kobilansky Surface Range Soils Management Specialist

Chris Suelzle Minerals Division Director
Jacob Lardy Land Management Specialist

Akshay Patel Investment Officer
Kris Snow Revenue Compliance
Joseph Stegmiller Surface Division Director
Jessica Ulmer Unclaimed Property

Maria Garcia Finance

Kristie McCusker
Lynn Spencer
Jennifer Bennett
Jessica Fretty

Minerals Management Officer
Minerals Title Specialist
Unclaimed Property
Unclaimed Property

Garret Hecker Surface Range Soils Management Specialist

Matthew Reile IT

Pam Reile Revenue Compliance

Vicki Siegel Finance

Laurie Crosby Administrative Support

Kayla Spangelo Surface Range Soils Management Specialist

James Wald Legal Council

Guests in Attendance:

Jacy Schafer
Chris Joseph
Kevin Balaod
Lawrence Bender
Joseph Harris
Taylor Stricklin

Office of the Governor Office of the Governor WithIntelligence (Journalist)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve minutes of the May 29, 2025 meeting was made by Treasurer Beadle and the motion was seconded by Secretary Howe and the motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

OPERATIONS

Commissioner's Report

Special Mention Events

- State Investment Board Investment Committee attended June 13 & July 11, 2025, meetings as Vice Chair
- State Investment Board Securities Litigation Committee chaired June 17, 2025, meeting
- <u>Capitol Grounds Planning Commission</u> per request of the Commission, the Department gave a presentation on the Capitol Building Fund during the Commission's June 25, 2025, meeting

Human Resources

• <u>Unclaimed Property Compliance Officer</u> – new position provided by the Legislature; posted with hopes to have filled in August/September

<u>Geological Survey Rare Earth Minerals Project</u> – Members of the North Dakota Geological Survey will be visiting our office on July 16, 2025, to provide an update on their study of rare earth minerals on Trust Lands. We plan to have them present at a future Land Board meeting as well.

Financial Dashboard

COMMON SCHOOLS TRUST FUND (CSTF) OVERVIEW



CSTF ASSET BALANCE as of 03/31/2025 (unaudited)

\$7,485,563,472

+\$688 million year-over-year from 03/31/2024 balance of \$6.87 billion





COMMON SCHOOLS TRUST FUND 2023 -25 (CSTF) DISTRIBUTIONS



Monthly Distribution to the State Tuition Fund for the 2023-25 Biennium \$27,770,000

Multiplied by 9 months per year =\$250,000,000

Divided by 115,740 students = \$2,160/student per year

North Dakota Cost to Educate Per Student 75.7% State Funding Share \$2,160 CSTF per Student Annual Distribution \$13,778/year =\$10,430 =21% of state funding share

COMMON SCHOOLS TRUST FUND 2025 -27 (CSTF) DISTRIBUTIONS



Monthly Distribution to the State Tuition Fund for the 2025-27 Biennium \$32,500,000

Multiplied by 9 months per year =\$292,500,000

Divided by 116,598 students = \$2,508/student per year

North Dakota Cost to Educate Per Student 75.7% State Funding Share \$2,508 CSTF per Student Annual Distribution \$13,778/year =\$10,430 =24% of state funding share



COMMON SCHOOLS TRUST FUND 2023 -25 (CSTF) DISTRIBUTIONS



Current Biennium Distributions to the State Tuition Fund through 06/30/2025

\$500 million of \$500 million total

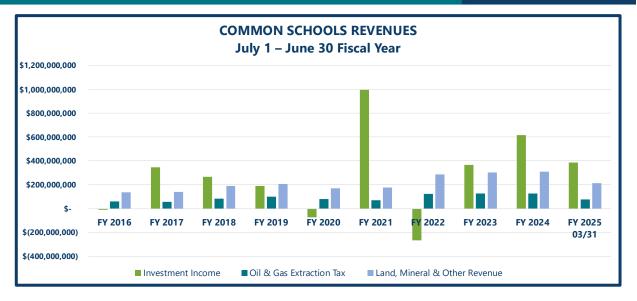
CSTF Distributions Since FY 2014

\$2 BILLION OF PROPERTY TAX RELIEF!



COMMON SCHOOLS TRUST FUND (CSTF) OVERVIEW





STRATEGIC INVESTMENT & IMPROVEMENT FUND (SIIF) OVERVIEW



SIIF BALANCE as of 02/28/2025 (unaudited)

- Total Balance \$1,605,093,583
- Uncommitted Balance \$1,302,151,676

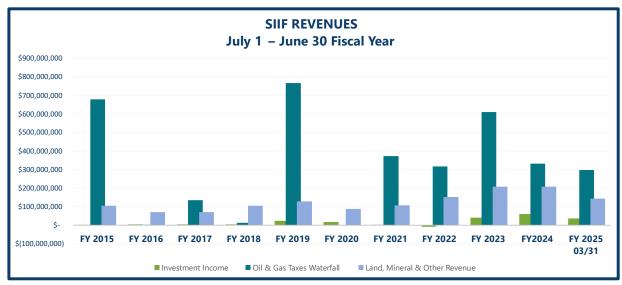
SIIF BALANCE as of 03/31/2025 (unaudited)

- Total Balance \$1,692,697,150
- Uncommitted Balance \$1,415,825,323



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT & IMPROVEMENT FUND (SIIF) HIGHLIGHTS







ESTIMATED TOTAL NET ASSETS as of 02/28/2025



Mineral Tracker Valuation as of October 31, 2024, on 2.6 million Mineral Acres \$2,461,271,622 Surface Fair Market Value as of April 2025, on 706,000 Surface Acres \$736,474,769







DIVISION REPORTS

SURFACE

SURFACE DIVISION ENCUMBRANCES ISSUED



Encumbrances issued by the Commissioner: 21 Right of Way Agreementsin May generated atotal of \$428,565 in income for the Trusts.

June had 23 Right of Way agreements generating \$1,820,159 in initial ROW payments. The highest one month initial ROW payments in ND Trust Land history!

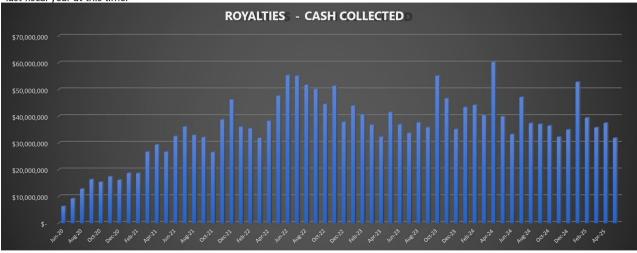


MINERALS

MINERALS DIVISION FISCAL YTD O/G ROYALTIES



As of May 31, 2025*, for fiscal year 2024-25 the Department has received **\$421,788,582** in royalties as compared to **\$471,797,311** last fiscal year at this time.

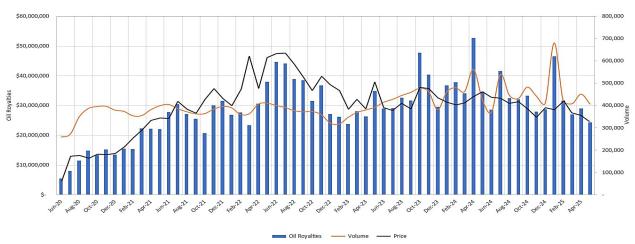


^{*}May royalty revenue is from March gas production and April oil production.

PRICE MAIN DRIVER OF O/G ROYALTIES



In the early years production growth was the driver of the Department's royalty increases. Now that our net monthly production has been more stable, averaging 457,543 barrels per month over the past twelve months, the price of oil & gas is the main driver of monthly royalty variations.



UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY DIVISION

https://unclaimedproperty.nd.gov



For the month of May 2025, the Division paid 1436 claims with \$1,218,110 returned to rightful owners. The Division also received 87 holder reports with a dollar value of \$188,760.







UNCLAIMED PROPERTY DIVISION

https://unclaimedproperty.nd.gov



For the month of June 2025, the Division paid 2803 claims with \$860,994 returned to rightful owners.

The Division also received 49 holder reports with a dollar value of \$222,018.

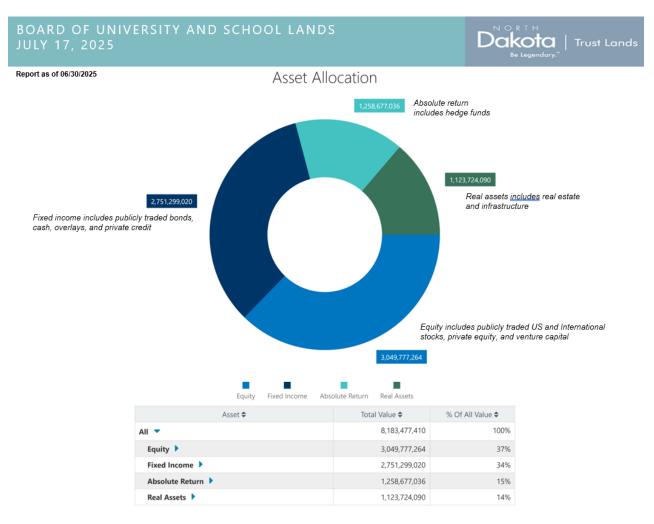






INVESTMENTS

Investment Update



BOARD OF UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL LANDS JULY 17, 2025

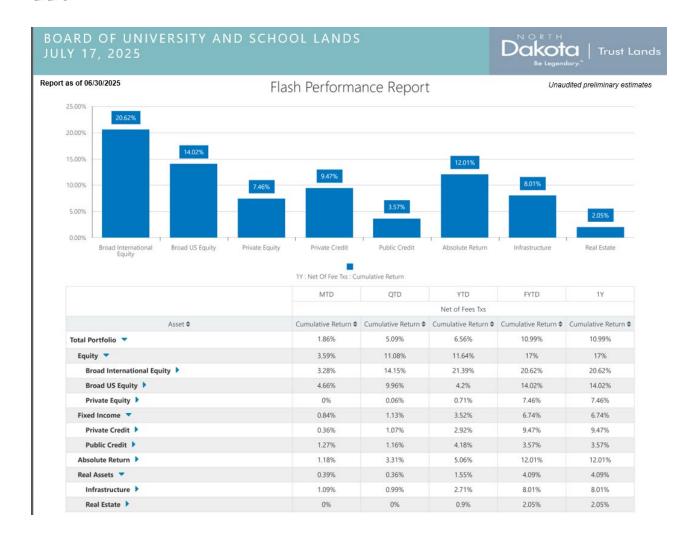


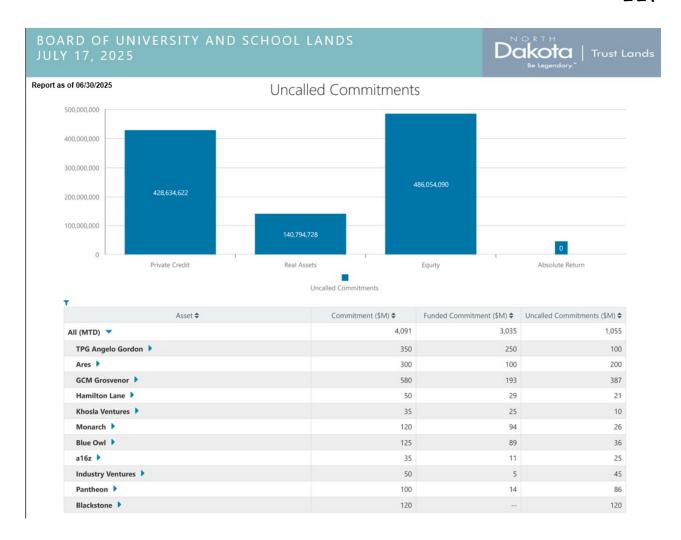
Report as of 06/30/2025



Target Range Portfolio Allocation Target Lower Range Upper Range

Asset \$	Total Value \$	% Of All Value \$	Target Weight \$	Over/Under % \$	Over/Under \$ \$
All (MTD)	8,183,477,410	100%	100%	0%	
Equity 🔻	3,049,777,264	37.27%	38%	-0.73%	-59,944,152
Private Equity	275,108,186	3.36%	8%	-4.64%	-379,570,007
Broad International Equity	1,383,589,382	16.91%	15%	1.91%	156,067,771
Broad US Equity	1,391,079,696	17%	15%	2%	163,558,084
Fixed Income 🔻	2,751,299,020	33.62%	30%	3.62%	296,255,797
Cash / (Leverage)	-161,614,236	-1.97%	-5%	3.03%	247,559,634
Private Credit	1,247,535,764	15.24%	20%	-4.76%	-389,159,718
Public Credit >	1,665,377,493	20.35%	15%	5.35%	437,855,881
Absolute Return	1,258,677,036	15.38%	15%	0.38%	31,155,425
Real Assets 🔻	1,123,724,090	13.73%	17%	-3.27%	-267,467,070
Infrastructure >	407,780,940	4.98%	7%	-2.02%	-165,062,479
Real Estate	715,943,150	8.75%	10%	-1.25%	-102,404,591





Dakota | Trust Lands Report as of 06/30/2025 Liquidity Waterfall 10,000,000,000 8,165,159,029 8,000,000,000 5,814,429,092 6,000,000,000 4,000,000,000 2,000,000,000 1 Day 1 Week 1 Month 1 Quarter 6 Months All Time Amount Entity \$ 1 Day (\$M) **\$** 1 Week (\$M) **\$** 1 Month (\$M) ♦ 1 Quarter (\$M) ♦ 6 Months (\$M) ♦ 1 Year (\$1M) \$ All Time (\$M) \$ 573 2,510 4,468 6,331 8,165 All 🔻 3,654 5,814 Equity > 1,011 2,155 2,775 2,775 2,775 3,050 573 Fixed Income > 1,499 1,499 1,499 1,747 1,891 2,749 **Absolute Return** 194 468 668 1,250 Real Assets 825 996 1,117

Measures how long it would take to liquidate the entire portfolio

Investment Consultant Contract

INVESTMENTS



Investment Consultant Search

July 17th, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- Investment consultant contract expiring August 31, 2025
- 12-year relationship with RVK began in 2013
- Competitive search process was conducted (investment management services procurement exempt from RFP under NDCC 54-44.4-02)
- Goal to ensure Land Board is receiving industry-leading consulting services at a competitive price
- Staff recommends renewing contract with RVK

PURPOSE





Reassess consultant relationship to ensure alignment with evolving investment goals



Evaluate firms with expertise across both public and private markets



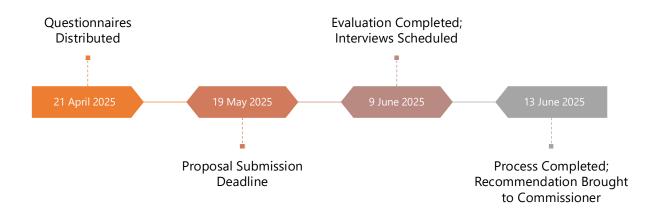
Validate that current and future consultant fees remain competitive by surveying the broader market



Objective: Select a long-term partner aligned with our mission and fiduciary duty

TIMELINE





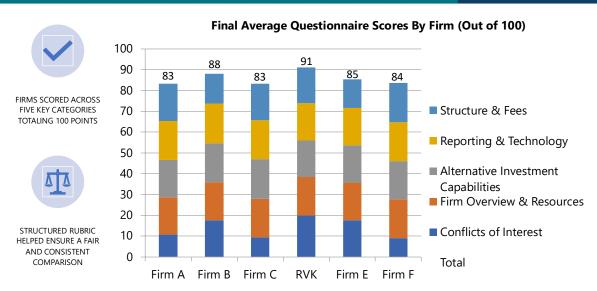
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE



8 Firms Contacted:	6 Submitted Proposals			
Callan	2 Declined			
Cambridge	All responses evaluated using consistent rubric			
Meketa				
Mercer	Key Evaluation Areas & Weighting			
NEPC	Minimum Qualifications – Pass/Fail			
RVK	• Conflicts of Interest – 20 pts			
Verus	 Firm Overview & Consulting – 20 pts Alternative Investments – 20 pts 			
Wilshire	• Reporting & Technology – 20 pts			
	• Structure & Fees – 20 pts			

SCORING METHODOLOGY

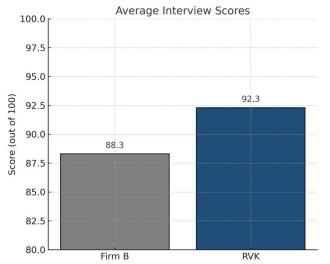




FINALIST INTERVIEWS



- Structured interviews conducted with 2 finalists
- Scored across 10 qualitative questions on a 1–10 scale
- Topics included team structure, manager search, reporting, and research access
- RVK received the highest average score across all reviewers



SELECTION



Staff recommends RVK for the following reasons

- **Fund Familiarity:** Extensive knowledge of the Fund's priorities, policies, and portfolio evolution built over a multi-year partnership.
- **Independent & Conflict-Free:** 100% employee-owned; no asset management or manager fees.
- **Strategic Advisor:** Trusted partner on asset allocation, due diligence, governance, and independent reporting to the Board.
- Broad Expertise: Strong across public and private markets with scalable support.
- Enhanced Support: Custom reporting, stable and experienced team, and costeffective engagement.

RVK OVERVIEW



• Headquarters: Portland, Oregon

• Founded: 1985

• Ownership: 100% employee-owned

• Independence: No proprietary products or revenue from managers

• **Client Base:** 200+ institutional clients (public funds, endowments, foundations, and retirement systems)

• AUM Advised: \$3.2+ trillion

• **Staff:** 160+ professionals, including 45 consultants

Consultants Assigned to ND:

• Josh Kevan, CFA – CEO, Senior Consultant, Principal (Joined 2005)

Jennifer Sandberg – Senior Consultant, Principal (Joined 2006)

CONTRACT SUMMARY



Term: 3-years beginning Sep 1, 2025 with optional 2-year extension

Services Highlights:

- Performance analysis and reporting
- Quarterly in-person meetings
- Capital markets research and client education
- Asset allocation analysis and investment policy review
- Pacing studies for private markets commitments
- Investment manager search, selection and monitoring
- Industry research and public fund peer analysis

MOTION: The Board approve renewing RVK's investment consulting contract for three years, with an optional additional two-year extension.

Action Record	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Absent
Secretary Howe			X		
Superintendent Baesler		X	X		
Treasurer Beadle	X		Х		
Attorney General Wrigley			X		
Governor Armstrong			Х		

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Large IT Project Presentation

LARGE IT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Statistics



The 68th legislative assembly appropriated \$4.9 million in capital asset funding for additional enhancements to our Land Management System (LMS) along with the development necessary for online payment processing and full customization of our customer portal. The dedicated effort from Trust Lands staff allowed for this project to close out on time, in June of 2025, and under budget with approximately \$500,000 unspent.



LARGE IT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Internal and External Customer Wins



Land Management System (LMS)

Data Accessibility

- Unified system integrated with the accounting system as well as taking 4 separate legacy software applications between surface and minerals combining into one
- Ability to toggle between associated records with user friendly data queries
- Shareable custom system views to utilize between staff
- Weblinks to share that quickly send team members directly to a record
- Portal applications are integrated with LMS data with certain updates now automated based off team approvals of customer applications
- Configurable staff are able to update fees/calculations, some datasets, and letterhead names without additional development/customization
- Simplification of document generation process
- Soils database for surface division

Communication

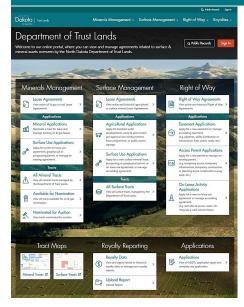
- Automated internal and external email notices/processes
- Significantly improved billing creation, visibility, & tracking in the system as opposed to manually tracking in Excel
- Workflow timelines that allow staff to visibly track and act on records at various stages
- Remote accessibility for team members now that software is cloud based – ex. surface auction data is up to date as the auction occurs



LARGE IT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Internal and External Customer Wins





Customer Portal

- •Centralized Applications & Royalty Reporting
- •Online payments! For the first time Trust Lands' customers may pay by echeck or credit card.
- •Customers have increased visibility of public records without needing to create an account. This increased visibility was designed with the intent of reducing public information requests.
- •Customers may sign in and view "My Records" pertaining directly to their history with Trust Lands. Records include payment history, leases, applications, royalty reports and right of way projects.
- •Royalty operators receive a formal receipt upon successfully submitting a royalty report. If the royalty report has issues, the customer can export the report with rows highlighted if they have an error.

Demos – Catelin Newell – Online Payment, Adam Otteson – Royalty Reporting, Joseph Stegmiller – Surface Tract detail with Soils Data

LITIGATION

Litigation Update

• Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation v. United States Department of the Interior Case Summary: Missouri riverbed ownership — Quiet title action brought by the federal government is proceeding, with discovery now completed; the U.S. and MHA filed separate summary judgment motions; our opposition brief was filed by the March 18, 2025 deadline; the U.S. filed its reply brief on April 18th; we now await the Court to either schedule a hearing on the motion or decide on the briefs; additionally, on February 28, 2025, the Department of Interior Acting Solicitor suspended the Biden administration's M-Opinion that was contrary to the state's position.

Commencement: July 2020

ND Assigned Attorneys: James Auslander, Kathryn Tipple, Peter Schaumberg, and

Nessa Coppinger (Beveridge & Diamond, Washington, D.C.) Matthew Sagsveen, AG Dir. of Natural Resources and Native

American Affairs

Counsel for MHA: Steven D. Gordon (Holland & Knight's Washington, D.C.)

Philip Merle Baker-Shenk (Holland & Knight's Washington,

D.C.)

Timothy Purdon (Robins Kaplan, Bismarck, ND) Timothy Billion (Robins Kaplan, Minneapolis, MN)

Counsel for United States

Department of Interior: Reuben S. Schifman (Washington, D.C.)

Court: United States District Court for the District of Columbia

Judge: Honorable Amy Berman Jackson

Win = North Dakota owns historical Missouri Riverbed (mineral rights) through Fort Berthold Indian Reservation resulting in release to state of tens of millions of dollars in withheld oil & gas royalties.

Lose = U.S. owns the riverbed in trust for MHA Nation so royalties are released to the tribe

• State of North Dakota, ex. rel. v Virginia Leland, et.al.

Case Summary: OHWM river island ownership; trial was held September 12-16, 2022; Judge Schmidt issued a Phase I Memorandum Decision on April 30, 2024, finding 1) the at issue Yellowstone River segment was navigable at statehood; 2) the at issue west bank of the river is owned by the state; 3) the at issue north island is not owned by the state; 4) the at issue south island is owned by the state; and 5) the state's claim is not barred by laches. The remaining issues of conveyances, mineral acreage calculations, etc. are now being determined in Phase II proceedings. On December 19, 2024, the Court granted opposing parties' summary judgment motion on certain issues. A trial to determine the remaining issues was held January 29, 2025, in Watford City. On May 8, 2025, the Court issued its trial decision ruling that: 1) the State does not own the North Island; 2) the 1950 deed from the State conveyed the at issue lots to the Montana state line; and 3) the State only reserved a 5% mineral interest in the 1950 deed. Whiting will now calculate each owner's fractional interest and net acreage in the at issue parcels, after which a final judgment will be entered. Parties will then have 60 days to appeal to the ND Supreme Court.

Commencement: January 2016

ND Assigned Attorneys: Zachary Pelham (Pearce Durick, Bismarck)

Matthew Sagsveen, AG Dir. of Natural Resources and Native

American Affairs

James Wald, DTL General Counsel

Counsel for Whiting Oil

and Gas Corp:

Paul Forster (Crowley Fleck, PLLP, Bismarck, ND) Shane Hanson (Crowley Fleck, PLLP, Bismarck, ND)

Counsel for Defendant(s): Kevin Chapman (Chapman Law Firm, P.C., Williston, ND)

Ariston Johnson (Johnson & Sundeen, Watford City, ND)

and Others

Court: State District Court, McKenzie County

Judge: Honorable Robin Schmidt

Win = State owns at issue Yellowstone River islands and related mineral interests

Lose = Plaintiffs owns at issue Yellowstone River islands and related mineral interests

• Continental Resources, Inc., v. North Dakota Board of University and School Lands and the United States of America (Interpleader)

<u>Case Summary:</u> OHWM fed/state dispute – ND Federal District Court issued opinion March 21, 2023, granting Board's motion for partial summary judgment on "Acquired Federal Lands" issue; this means the Wenck survey controls for establishing the historical ordinary high-water mark of the Missouri River in areas where the uplands were acquired by the federal government, and not original "public domain lands"; the federal government appealed; 8th Circuit oral argument was held October 22, 2024; the 8th Circuit issued its decision on May 2, 2025, affirming the District Court's ruling; the federal government has until mid-July to request an en banc rehearing.

Commencement: December 2016

ND Assigned Attorneys: Philip Axt, ND Solicitor General

Counsel for Continental: Lawrence Bender (Fredrikson & Byron P.A., Bismarck, ND)

Spencer Ptacek (Fredrikson & Byron P.A., Bismarck, ND)

Counsel for USA: Shaun Pettigrew (Environment and Natural Resources

Division (ENRD)) of the U.S. Department of Justice

Court: United States District Court, District of North Dakota

Judge: U.S. District Judge Daniel L. Hovland

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Under the authority of North Dakota Century Code Sections 44-04-19.1 and 44-04-19.2, the Board close the meeting to the public and go into executive session for purposes of attorney consultation regarding:

- Royalty Settlements
- State of North Dakota ex. rel. v Virginia Leland, et. al.

Action Record	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Absent
Secretary Howe		X	X		
Superintendent Baesler			Х		
Treasurer Beadle			Х		
Attorney General Wrigley	Х		Х		
Governor Armstrong			Х		

The Board entered into executive session at 10:02 AM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Members Present:

Kelly Armstrong Governor

Kirsten Baelser Superintendent of Public Instruction

Thomas Beadle Treasurer

Michael Howe Secretary of State
Drew Wrigley Attorney General

Department of Trust Lands Personnel present:

Joseph Heringer Commissioner

Catelin Newell Administrative Staff Officer

Kate Schirado Executive Assistant

Adam Otteson Revenue Compliance Division Director

James Wald Legal Council Elvedina Papalichev Paralegal

Chris Suelzle Minerals Division Director
Rick Owings Administrative Staff Officer

Guests in Attendance:

Jacy Schafer Office of the Governor Chris Joseph Office of the Governor

The executive session adjourned at 10:48 AM and the Board returned to the open session meeting to rejoin the public. During executive session the Board discussed Royalty Deduction Settlements and the State of North Dakota ex. rel. v Virginia Leland, et. al. with its attorneys. No formal action was taken when the open meeting reconvened.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:48 AM.

Governor Armstrong, Chairman Board of University and School Lands

Joseph Heringer, Secretary Board of University and School Lands