



IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

MINUTES MEETING NO. 14-25

Water Center
Conference Rooms 602 B - D
322 E. Front Street
BOISE

November 20, 2025

WORK SESSION

Brad Little
Governor

Jeff Raybould
Chairman
St. Anthony
At Large

Jo Ann Cole-Hansen
Vice Chair
Lewiston
At Large

Dean Stevenson
Secretary
Paul
District 3

Dale Van Stone
Hope
District 1

Albert Barker
Boise
District 2

Brian Olmstead
Twin Falls
At Large

Marcus Gibbs
Grace
District 4

Patrick McMahon
Sun Valley
At Large

At 9:32 AM (MT) Chairman Raybould called the work session meeting to order in Boise, Idaho and on Zoom. The meeting was livestreamed on the Board's YouTube Channel following the Finance Committee meeting.

Agenda Item No. 1: Roll Call

Board Members Present

Jeff Raybould, Chairman
Jo Ann Cole-Hansen, Vice Chairman
Al Barker
Marcus Gibbs
Patrick McMahan, Online
Brian Olmstead
Dean Stevenson, Secretary
Dale Van Stone

Staff Members Present

Mat Weaver
Brian Patton
Cynthia Bridge Clark
Wesley Hipke
Mary Condon
Nick Banish
Megan Jenkins
Erik Boe
Corri Parsley
Amy Cassel, Online
Michelle Richman, Online

Public Present

Ann Yribar
John Simpson
Douglas Jones, *Idaho Water Engineering*
Tracy Ortiz, *Langdon Group*
Bryant Kuechle, *Langdon Group*
Ryan Alcorn, *Bureau of Reclamation*

Chris Keith, *Bureau of Reclamation*, Online
Steve Stuebner
Scott Pugrd, *Idaho Water Company*
Krista Davis, *Idaho Water Company*
Agenda Item No. 7 was moved to the first order of business.

Agenda Item No. 7: Langdon Group Recommendations Report – Evaluation of SWCC-IDWR Merger

Bryant Kuechle, Acting Administrator with the Langdon Group, provided a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the findings related to the evaluation of a Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) and Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) merger.

Following the presentation, Director Mat Weaver thanked the Board and staff for their participation in the evaluation process. He noted that a recurring theme and key finding throughout the process was that IDWR is the best agency for the SWCC to merge with.

However, he also acknowledged some uneasiness about merging with IDWR, given its role as a regulatory agency. Seeing that IDWR often makes headlines for enforcement actions and curtailment, there is concern that this reputation could hinder the collaborative work needed to achieve strong conservation objectives and projects—particularly with the same stakeholders who may also be subject to enforcement or curtailment actions.

With the evaluation process now complete and submitted to the Idaho Department of Government Efficiency Task Force, Mr. Weaver indicated that the recommendations report will also be forwarded to the Division of Financial Management, the Division of Human Resources, and Governor Little’s office. He further shared that he expects to present before legislative leadership as the next session approaches. Moving forward, the direction of this effort will depend on how the Governor and Legislature choose to proceed and depending on who ultimately takes the lead, the process may take different forms, but the goal will be to have some realized modest savings in the general fund.

Following a review and discussion period related to agency collaboration, merger timeline, statutory obligations, leadership, etc., Chairman Raybould extended the Boards assistance in this matter and thanked staff for the presentation.

Agenda Item No. 2: Anderson Ranch Dam Raise Update

Ryan Alcorn, Acting Area Manager with the Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) introduced himself and his colleague Chris Keith who would be providing a briefing update to the Board on the status of the Anderson Rancho Dam Raise with a focus on environmental compliance and design.

Mr. Keith reported that the Project’s environmental compliance process has been reinitiated. Several subject matter experts are currently reviewing and updating information that was previously included in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This updated analysis, conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will allow the Bureau to publish a final EIS.

He emphasized that Bureau staff are closely monitoring progress over the coming months to maintain the most efficient schedule possible. At this time, publication of the final EIS is anticipated in late 2026 to early 2027.

Regarding design, Mr. Keith stated that for the work around the reservoir rim, the mitigation required due to the additional six feet has reached 100% completion of design drawings and specifications. For the overall Project design, it is currently at 90% completion. The 90% design package was submitted in October, initiating a lengthy and detailed review process that began in November and remains ongoing. The Bureau is working closely with Technical Service experts, and 100% design completion is anticipated in spring 2026.

An additional Project milestone achieved by the Bureau was the completion of a technical review of the current dam raise designs by an independent consultant review board. The board provided its final report in fall 2025.

Following review, Chairman Raybould thanked Mr. Keith and Alcorn for the update.

Agenda Item No. 3: Water Supply Bank & Rental Pool Annual Report

Water Supply Bank Supervisor, Mary Condon provided the Board with an update on the 2023-2024 Program Activities related to the Rental Pool and the Board's Water Supply Bank.

With no further review, Chairman Raybould moved to Agenda Item No. 4.

Agenda Item No. 4: Upper Snake Basin Study—Letter of Interest

Via Zoom, Project Manager Amy Cassel reported that on November 5, staff received letter from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) stating that the IWRB's Letter of Interest for the Upper Snake River Basin Study has been recommended for further consideration and is advancing in the process. Although BOR has not yet issued a formal award notice or provided associated deadlines, Ms. Cassel explained that the anticipated next steps are outlined in the original WaterSMART Basin Study Notice to Interested Parties.

Following discussion, Chairman Raybould thanked staff for the update.

Agenda Item No. 5: Administrative Rules Update

Groundwater Protection Manager, Erik Boe provided a verbal briefing on administrative rule making efforts. Mr. Boe reported that for the 2025-2026 period, three Zero-Based Reviews were conducted, with two of them IDWR Board rules, Shoshone Bannock Tribal Water Supply Bank Rules, and the Stream Channel Alteration Rules.

Following two public meetings for each rule chapter this past summer, the rules were presented to the Board, which adopted them by resolution on August 29, 2025. Staff were then authorized to publish the proposed rules in the October Administrative Bulletin.

After publication, no comments were received; therefore, the Notice of Pending Rules was published in the December Administrative Bulletin. Following review by the Division of Financial Management (DFM), staff will prepare the administrative rule packets for the 2026 legislative session, present them to the House and Senate Committees, and develop the necessary presentations.

In closing, Mr. Boe reported that a new Zero-Based schedule is in the works for the next series of rulemakings, which will be a review of rules over an eight-year period. The DFM is preparing said schedule for review and comments.

With no further review, Chairman Raybould continued to the next order of business.

Agenda Item No. 6: Priest Lake Operations

Via Zoom, Northern Regional Manager Michelle Richman conveyed that said presentation was also shared with the Lakes Commission and the Priest River Watershed group. She noted that Priest Lake operations in 2025 differed from past practices. However, the goal is to implement changes that move the system in a positive direction, and these changes have received positive feedback from stakeholders this year.

Ms. Richman's presentation highlighted:

- 2025 Recreation Season Dam Operations
- Lake Operations - Fall Drawdown 2025
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Monitoring Efforts and Best Practices

At this time, a brief and question period ensued.

IWRB Executive Manager Brian Patton suggested that IWRB hold some sort of Ad Hoc or Committee meeting to assist with working Ms. Richman and staff related to stakeholder's input before the season.

With no further review, Chairman Raybould thanked staff for the presentation.

Agenda Item No. 8: Other Items

There was no other business to come before the Board during the work session.

Agenda Item No. 9: Adjourn

Chairman Raybould adjourned the meeting at 11:41 AM.

The Board broke for lunch at noon. Then the group departed for a field trip to the Napa Meridian Headworks reconstruction.

Respectfully submitted by Milin J. Ream, Administrative Assistant to the Board.