



COLORADO

State Land Board

Department of Natural Resources

Response to Wildfire Matters Review Committee
House Bill 2014-1210

Thursday, August 14, 2014

Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners
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Summary

House Bill 14-1210 (Attachment A) requires the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners (State Land Board) to evaluate the feasibility of entering into intergovernmental wildfire agreements with counties in which state trust lands reside and to provide reasonable wildfire management alternatives to the Legislative Wildfire Matters Review Committee.

Background

The State Land Board (SLB) manages an endowment of assets held in perpetual, intergenerational, public trusts for the financial support of Colorado's public schools and other public institutions. The SLB's mandate is to produce reasonable and consistent revenues over time and to promote and enhance sound stewardship of the assets.

The SLB owns 2.8 million acres of land and 4.0 million acres of mineral rights as well as an assortment of commercial real estate, water rights, and other property improvements. The SLB's annual program budget is \$4.8 million and 40 FTE. The SLB manages 6,244 leases for many different uses of state trust assets, including agricultural, mineral, recreational, commercial, and renewable energy (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Number of leases by lease type

Lease Type	Leases
Agriculture	2368
Coal	11
Commercial	63
Conservation Reserve Program	101
Clay	10
Disposal Well	14
Exploration Permit	66
Geothermal	1
Gravel	28
General Mining	9
Gravel Permit	12
Gas Storage	7
Long-Term Non-development	222
Multiple Use	27
Oil & Gas	2700
Other Minerals	46
Other Use	155
Quarry	12
Recreation	221
Sale	1
Solar	7
Special Use Permit	147
Uranium	3
Wind	12
Water	1
Grand Total	6244

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The SLB has six district offices located throughout Colorado. SLB staff administers the leases in their designated regions. They conduct regular inspections, identify land management issues, and establish property specific management plans for trust properties and associated lessees. Due to the relatively small budget and staff, the SLB relies on its lessees to provide day-to-day management and to a large extent stewardship of state trust assets.

Exhibit 2 lists the number of State Land Board leases by county.

Exhibit 2: State Land Board Leases by County

County	Leases	County	Leases	County	Leases
Adams	147	Fremont	89	Otero	65
Alamosa	19	Gilpin	2	Ouray	2
Arapahoe	141	Grand	34	Park	83
Archuleta	13	Gunnison	14	Phillips	47
Baca	86	Huerfano	126	Pitkin	8
Bent	243	Jackson	119	Prowers	92
Boulder	31	Jefferson	45	Pueblo	107
Chaffee	24	Kiowa	291	Rio Blanco	7
Cheyenne	189	Kit Carson	139	Rio Grande	31
Clear		La Plata	59	Routt	252
Creek	7	Lake	7	Saguache	60
Conejos	54	Larimer	112	San Miguel	52
Crowley	68	Las Animas	181	Sedgwick	37
Custer	22	Lincoln	367	Summit	2
Denver	25	Logan	268	Teller	22
Dolores	17	Mesa	2	Washington	249
Douglas	28	Mineral	1	Weld	774
Eagle	25	Moffat	340	Yuma	173
El Paso	262	Montezuma	52	Grand Total	6244
Elbert	355	Morgan	177		

Wildfire Mitigation

The SLB's forest management objectives are established in coordination with its lessees and the Colorado State Forest Service. SLB lessees are required to manage range conditions to minimize wildfire potential.

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) establishes objectives and actively manages forest resources on all forested state trust land, which is about 360,000 acres. Within the past 10 years, the CSFS has conducted forest management operations on 22,000 of those acres. All such management actions are designed to reduce the threat of large, high-intensity wildfires. To support this objective, the CSFS seeks additional funding sources such as a recent \$750,000 FEMA grant for hazardous fuels reduction

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Wildfire Funding

Over 70% of SLB property is on the Eastern Plains where wildfires are much less damaging and cheaper to suppress. The State Land Board does not currently have any dedicated funding for wildfire suppression costs. Instead, SLB lessees assume all liability arising from the lessee's use, occupation or control of their leased property and the lessee indemnifies the state against loss. SLB lessees also pay Possessory Interest Tax to counties as required by Section 39-1-103(17), C.R.S. Possessory Interest Tax is assessed against the for-profit use of government-owned property. In FY 2013-14, State Land Board lessees paid \$427,000 in possessory interest tax.