
My letter as a Commissioner on the sale of the 160 acres

Subject: My Position on Signing the Opposition Letter Regarding the Driggs-160 Public Lands Sale

Dear Fellow Teton County Board of County Commissioners and Relevant Parties,
I am writing to formally explain my position regarding the proposed opposition letters to Governor Little and Director Dustin Miller of the Idaho Department of Lands, dated August 25, 2025, concerning the sale of the "Driggs-160" public land parcel. As you know, these letters express strong opposition to the sale on behalf of the Teton County Board of County Commissioners. While I respect the concerns raised by our community and the intent behind these letters, I must respectfully decline to sign them.

My decision is based on my belief that this matter has been appropriately decided at the state level by the Governor, the Attorney General, and the State Board of Land Commissioners. These officials, acting within their authority under Idaho law, have reviewed the proposal and authorized the sale after due consideration. It is my view that intervening or expressing opposition from the local county level would be inappropriate, as it could undermine the state's decision-making process and overstep the boundaries of our local jurisdiction. The management and disposal of state-owned endowment lands, including decisions related to sales for the benefit of Idaho's charitable institutions, are fundamentally state responsibilities, and I believe it is not our place as county commissioners to challenge or second-guess those determinations.

I understand the passion surrounding this issue, including the value of public lands for agriculture, wildlife, and community heritage, as highlighted in the numerous public comments we have received. However, I remain convinced that respecting the state's authority in this instance is the proper course of action. If there are opportunities for local input through established channels, such as public hearings or formal comment periods, I would support encouraging community participation in those forums.

Thank you for understanding my position. I am committed to working collaboratively with you on other matters that directly fall within our local purview to serve the best interests of Teton County residents.

Sincerely,
Ron James
Teton County Commissioner
(208) 776-8254 mailto:rjames@tetoncountyidaho.com
150 Courthouse Drive Driggs, Idaho 83422