

Advocacy Office Report

Trust Lands Administration Board Meeting:

January 22, 2026



2026 General Session



Key Bill: SB43



Continued legislative outreach, including use of individual stat sheets



Facilitation of weekly collaboration meetings during the legislative session.



SB43

Land Trusts Protection and Advocacy Office Amendments
Sponsors: Sen. Derrin Owens & Rep. Jefferson Burton

- SB43 clarifies the authority, purpose, and duties of the Advocacy Office and creates accountability requirements for trust distributions to institutional beneficiaries in UT Code § 53D-2.
- SB43 is based on outcomes from a study group established by the legislature to address findings and recommendations about the Advocacy Office in the 2024 OLAG Trust System audit.

A COMPREHENSIVE STATUTORY REMEDY TO THE 2024 TRUST SYSTEM AUDIT:

Audit Recommendations to the Legislature:

- 1.1 Consider creating guidelines on trust distribution use for institutional beneficiaries.
Resolved on lines 843-850
- 1.2 Consider requiring beneficiary spending plans & publicly noticed year end summaries.
Resolved on lines 851-855
- 2.1 Consider clarifying the Advocacy Office responsibilities and role.
Resolved on lines 498-501, 549-577
- 2.2 Consider adding institutional beneficiary distribution review to Advocacy Office.
Resolved on lines 783-784, 861-863

*Other audit recommendations have been addressed administratively.

BILL SUPPORT

Unanimous support of the Legislative Study Group

- Sen. Derrin R. Owens, Senate Co-Chair
- Rep. Jefferson S. Burton, House Co-Chair
- Warren Petersen, Past SITLA Board Chair
- Marlo Oaks, State Treasurer & SITFO Board Chair
- Richard Ellis, Advocacy Committee Chair
- Joseph Jenkins, USU Director of Real Property
- Dr. Cade Douglas, Sevier District Superintendent
- Rich K. Nye, Governor's Senior Education Advisor
- Tom Bachtell, Trust Law Attorney

Full engagement of the Trust Beneficiary Institutions.

Adopted as a Committee Bill by the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee, November 2025.

Endorsed by the JLC of the Utah School Boards & Superintendents Associations, the Utah PTA, and other trust advocacy stakeholders.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE BILL

Re-titles & clarifies the authority and purpose of the Advocacy Office as an agent to represent, advise, safeguard, and advocate for current and future trust beneficiaries.

Centrally lists the trust beneficiaries, assigns authorized liaisons, and articulates their rights and interests.

Creates more accountability for distributions to institutional beneficiaries by requiring spending plans, accounting standards, and reporting.

Establishes shared governance and oversight of the Advocacy Office between the State Treasurer and a seven member advisory council responsible for strategic planning and rulemaking.

Refines the director's role and responsibilities:

- Clarifies qualifications, at-will nature of the position, and removal process.
- Revised duties include: distribution monitoring, dispute resolution, notification, protocols and training development, and accountability.

Strengthens the Trust by clarifying interactions in the system with intentional checks and balances. Improves the process and composition for the nominating committees of the trustee boards.



**NO FISCAL NOTE.
NO FTE INCREASE.
NO TAXPAYER COST.**

2026 UTAH GENERAL SESSION

Quantity Grants & In Lieu Selections

Outstanding Beneficiary Acreage Balances

| Trust Beneficiary | Grant Acreage | Remaining Surface | Remaining Mineral | Outstanding Grants |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Public Schools | 6,040,000 | 3,191,905 | 4,130,093 | \$2M + in lieu |
| Reservoirs | 500,000 | 35,631 | 96,894 | ~30 acres |
| Utah State University | 200,000 | 27,140 | 53,805 | ~1930 acres |
| University of Utah | 156,080 | 16,016 | 38,394 | ~40 acres |
| Schools for the Deaf | 100,000 | 4,691 | 11,793 | |
| Utah State Hospital | 100,000 | 7 | 9,675 | |
| Schools for the Blind | 100,000 | 451 | 12,412 | |
| Miners Hospital | 100,000 | 4,810 | 53,479 | ~5 acres |
| Colleges of Education | 100,000 | 4,516 | 20,792 | |
| Juvenile Justice Services | 100,000 | 14 | 9,056 | |
| College of Mines | 100,000 | 5,860 | 16,741 | |
| Public Buildings | 64,000 | 0 | 7,100 | |
| Total | 7,660,080 | 3,291,041 | 4,460,234 | |



Outreach Initiatives:

- Beneficiary Visits
- Media Outreach: \$134M School LAND Trust Distributions
- Early-stage Social Media Pilot
- Annual Report FY 25









Annual Beneficiary Visits

Highlights:

- All 12 beneficiary institutions visited
- Visits reviewed trust distributions, current asset maps, potential legislation, relevant trust matters and updated key contacts
- Began engagement with the Capitol Preservation Board to discuss the Public Buildings Trust
- Utah Colleges of Education Deans (UCED) appointed a representative from USU to be the liaison for Colleges of Education

| | |
|---|---|
|  PUBLIC SCHOOLS |  UNIVERSITY OF UTAH |
|  SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND |  COLLEGE OF MINES & EARTH SCIENCES |
|  SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF |  COLLEGES OF EDUCATION |
|  UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY |  JUVENILE JUSTICE AND YOUTH SERVICES |
|  MINERS HOSPITAL |  RESERVOIRS |
|  UTAH STATE HOSPITAL |  PUBLIC BUILDINGS |



Media Outreach: \$134M School LAND Trust Distributions

Earned Media Coverage:

- Extensive earned media reach statewide
- Multi-platform coverage secured, including TV, print, and digital media
- High-visibility broadcast highlighted by KSL News at 10
- Campaign momentum exceed expectations; total coverage surpassed the fall “Welcome Back to School” effort.



Record-breaking \$134 million headed to Utah schools from Utah Land Trusts

KSL News Utah
453K subscribers

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Utah schools will get a record \$134 million in 2026 trust lands money, a 20% bump

By: KATIE MCKELLAR - JANUARY 7, 2026 6:04 AM



KSLTV.com

Record-breaking \$134 million headed to Utah schools from Utah Land Trusts

Utah schools are preparing for a record-breaking infusion of \$134 million next year — and not a dollar of it comes from taxpayers.

1 day ago

Park Record

Park City School District to receive \$1 million from School LAND Trust Fund — \$168,600 more than last year

The School and Institutional Trust Funds Office has announced that the Trust Lands Permanent Funds will distribute a record-breaking \$134...

1 day ago

San Juan Record |

Local schools get \$780K in trust funds

The School and Institutional Trust Funds Office announced that the Trust Lands Permanent Funds will distribute a record-breaking \$134...

23 hours ago

The Herald Journal

Utah Schools set to receive record amount of School LAND Trust funds

Utah's School and Institutional Trust Funds Office (SITFO) announced Monday that the Trust Lands Permanent Funds will distribute a record...

1 day ago

Cache Valley Daily

Utah school trust distribution jumps 20%, sending \$3.9M to Cache County schools

NORTH LOGAN — Utah public schools will receive a record-breaking \$134 million from the Trust Lands Permanent Funds for the 2026-27 school...

1 day ago



Early-Stage Social Media Pilot

Establishing a Social Media Presence

Purpose

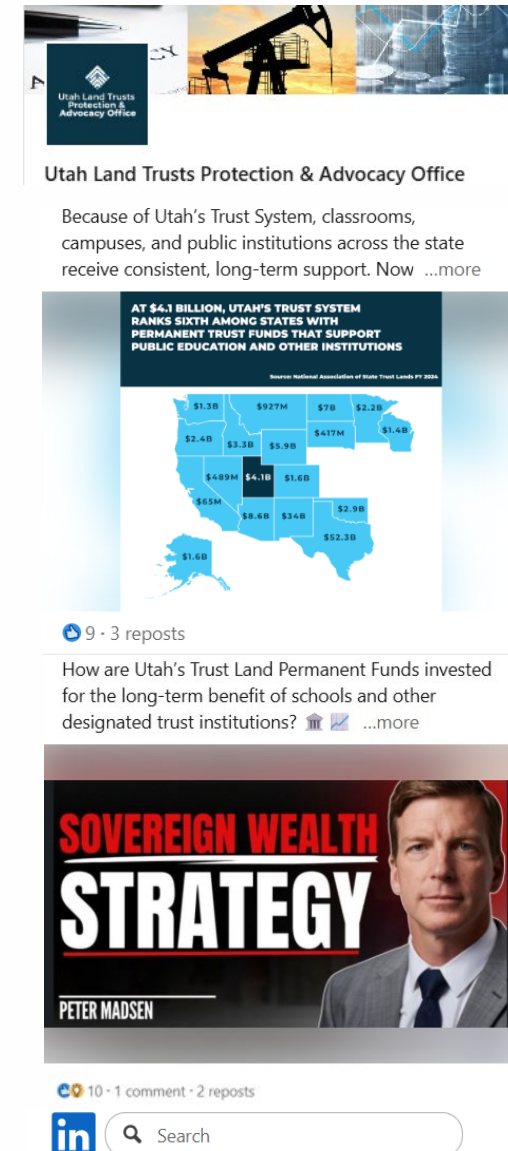
- Maintain a basic, current social media presence so the office is visible and accessible when searched.

Platforms

- X and LinkedIn; selected to reach audiences not widely served by other Trust entities through social media

Content Focus

- Established emphasis areas: Trust System awareness, beneficiary outreach, Advocacy Office role, and stakeholder collaboration.
- Guided by social media policy and best-practice guidelines





Early-Stage Social Media Pilot

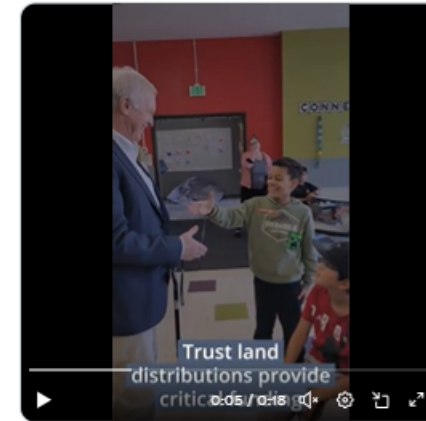
Establishing a Social Media Presence

Next Steps

- Maintain consistent, policy-aligned content on X and LinkedIn
- Use pilot findings to inform future social media strategy



Utah Land Trusts Protection & Adv... @UTTrust... · Nov 7, 2025
An inspiring visit to Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind (@UtSchoolsDB).
Trust land distributions help provide critical funding for specialized programs and enriched learning opportunities that help students thrive.
#UtahEducation #TrustLands



Utah Land Trusts Protection & Adv... @UTTrust... · Dec 17, 2025
Located on Trust Lands, this resource development could translate into lasting support for Utah K-12 students. Royalties from this project would support the Permanent School Fund.

Utah House Majority @utahhouse - Dec 16, 2025
Utahns have been mining for generations, and the story isn't over.
With 16 rare earth and critical minerals, this massive reserve will help the United States compete with China and power the next generation of tech with products mined and processed right here in Utah.



FY 2025 Annual Report

- Fulfills the requirements of §53D-2-203(5)
- Supports awareness and understanding of the Trust System
- Provides a concise overview of the history and governance of the Trust's
- Outlines the Advocacy Office's mission and responsibilities
- Summarizes the financial performance of each beneficiary's trust assets

[Excerpts of Annual Report](#)

