

Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, October 22, 2025
Teleconference

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pruhs called the meeting of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority to order on October 22, 2025, at 9:02 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL BOARD MEMBERS

Members present: Chair Dana Pruhs (Public Member); Vice-Chair Bill Kendig (Public Member); Julie Sande (Commissioner, DCCED) (arrived late); Llewellyn Smyth (Policy Director, DOR); Albert Fogle (Public Member); and Randy Eledge (Public Member).

A quorum was established.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Kendig to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. Fogle.

There was no objection to approving the agenda, as presented.

4. PRIOR MINUTES – September 10 & 11, and September 26, 2025

Mr. Eledge requested to amend paragraph five on page eight of the September 10 & 11, 2025 Minutes from 100 miles to 200 miles. It should read “The Ambler Road is approximately 200 miles long.” There were no other amendments.

MOTION: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Kendig to approve the Minutes of September 10-11, 2025, amending 100 miles to 200 miles on page eight, and to approve the Minutes of September 26, 2025, as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. Fogle.

There was no objection to approving the Minutes of September 10-11, 2025, including the amendment of 100 miles to 200 miles on page eight, and to approving the Minutes of September 26, 2025, as presented.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Pruhs reminded participants to please state their name and affiliation, if any, to please limit comments to today’s agenda, and to limit the comment to two minutes per individual.

Mattie (sp) Unidentified provided comments regarding the Ambler Road funding resolution,

specifically noting the language that this large expenditure “is in the public interest of all Alaskans.” She commented on recent news coverage relating to the 88 tribal resolutions that oppose this project. She supports their tribal sovereignty and right to oppose the road. She believes this information alone is enough to refute the claim that this is a beneficial project for all Alaskans. She hopes that the Board will revisit the tribal resolutions, as well as the many public comments submitted during the last environmental study and the effects on the people who live in the region. She expressed concern regarding the significant size of the expenditure of \$50 million. Even this large amount, she noted, will not cover the cost of the project, which has continued to grow due to inflation. She believes the \$50 million could make a huge difference spent on other developmental projects in Alaska that would provide more jobs and better outcomes for Alaskans. She urged the listeners to contact their State legislative representatives and ask them to increase their oversight of expenditures of this size. The \$50 million belongs to the people of Alaska, and she is hopeful to find other ways to spend that amount of funding.

Chair Pruhs thanked her for her comments.

John Gaedeke from Fairbanks stated that he knows that many people call in and complain about AIDEA’s consistent track record of failures and point out that the only time AIDEA is involved with successful projects, are with the projects that would have succeeded without State funding. Mr. Gaedeke indicated that his family started a business in the Brooks Range near the Ambler Road proposal. They are watching the project closely. Mr. Gaedeke expressed his concern that other folks will mention today regarding the conflicts of interest that most of the Board members have had in the past, especially during Covid, when hundreds of thousands of dollars funds were appropriated to Board members and when the \$300 million was allocated to the Arctic Fund, that is being siphoned from today. Mr. Gaedeke commented that there was no oversight then on the Arctic Fund, and it is happening again with this \$50 million to the project that has no oversight, and no definition from AIDEA on where the funding goes and how it will promote a road that is projected to cost into the billions of dollars.

Mr. Gaedeke noted that he was raised in the Brooks Range near many of the project proposals and he would like to see AIDEA succeed and not fail. He urged AIDEA to reinvent themselves to become an authority on industrial development. Mr. Gaedeke suggested that AIDEA get experienced consultation, possibly from Norway, since their industrial returns are triple the returns of Alaska in nearly every sector. Mr. Gaedeke asked the Board to please stop giving Alaska’s resources away. The Ambler Road project is already \$35 million in debt to Trilogy. Mr. Gaedeke asked how AIDEA considers this development when they already own foreign mining companies money. He commented that AIDEA has consistently destroyed relationships with Doyon and NANA. Mr. Gaedeke does not understand this, since those are the folks in the region who are supposed to benefit. He wants AIDEA to do better, and he requested AIDEA to do better.

Chair Pruhs thanked Mr. Gaedeke for his comments.

Andrea Unidentified from Anchorage echoed the previous comments. She reiterated that it is misleading for AIDEA to state that the road is for all Alaskans. She noted the lack of transparency and difficulty in understanding how the funding was appropriated with little to no

oversight. She believes there is a consistent and clear statement that the Board is not listening to public comments. She hopes that the Board hears the public today and offers more clarification. Additionally, she hopes that the Board better considers projects for Alaskans and better chooses the language that they use in talking about the projects. She requested oversight and transparency of the true cost of the projects and how they will be built and developed, despite the difficulty with the relationships in the region.

Chair Pruhs thanked her for her comments.

An unidentified public caller from Fairbanks echoed the comments of the previous callers. She noted that she works in the Brooks Range for an air service and flies every day over the proposed corridor for the Ambler Road. She is interested in maintaining the wilderness the way that it is, and is interested in Alaskan money not being used for purposes other than what many Alaskans would like it to be used for. She expressed disappointment in the continued push in the face of a lot of push-back from Alaskans. She echoed the comments of the previous public comments regarding the effectiveness of this road and past projects.

Chair Pruhs thanked her for her comments.

There were no other members of the public online or in-person who wished to make a public comment. Chair Pruhs closed the public comment period. There was no objection.

6. NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Kendig to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing the following: AIDEA Regulations, AIDEA Financials, Legislative matters, ANWR, Ambler, West Susitna Access, Investment opportunities, strategies, other matters related to AIDEA and matters that are subject to specific legal advice, which is subject to the attorney-client privilege. These matters, which if discussed publicly, could have an adverse effect on the finances of AIDEA, are matters that are attorney-client privilege, and matters involving consideration of issues and that by law are not subject to public disclosure due the executive or deliberate process privilege or other law. The executive session and matters discuss therein are proper subjects for an executive session under the Alaska Open Meetings Act, reference Alaska Statute 44.62.310 (C)(1), (3), and (4), and the Alaska Public Records Act. Motion seconded by Mr. Fogle.

A roll call was taken, and the motion to enter into Executive Session passed unanimously, with Commissioner Sande absent.

6A. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 9:15 a.m. Confidential and deliberative matters related to: AIDEA Regulations, AIDEA Financials, Legislative matters, AIDEA Projects including ANWR, Ambler, West Susitna Access, and Investment opportunities / strategies. All of which are subject to the deliberative process privilege, executive process privilege or other legal exemptions from the from the open meetings act. Also, matters related to AIDEA subject to the attorney-client privilege will be discussed.

The Board reconvened its regular meeting at 1:27 p.m. Chair Pruhs advised the public that the Board did not take any action on matters discussed while in Executive Session. The session was limited to discussion of matters directly protected from public disclosure by the Open Meetings Act.

6B. Resolution G25-09 Ambler Access Project Funding

Randy Ruaro, Executive Director, explained that Resolution G25-09 authorizes the transfer movement of \$50 million in funds that are now residing in the Revolving Fund to a subaccount of the Revolving Fund that is set aside by resolution of the Board, specifically for the Ambler Access Project. It has been publicly noted that the President has signed an order granting AIDEA its right-of-way and all federal permits associated with the project. This clears a path toward performance of a significant amount of work on the project. These funds will be accounted for and separately used for the Ambler Road Project.

MOTION: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Kendig to approve Resolution G25-09, Resolution of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority related to the development and funding of the Ambler Road Project by approving the transfer of \$50 million from the Revolving Fund to the separate Ambler Access Project Account within the Revolving Fund. Motion seconded by Mr. Eledge.

Chair Pruhs thanked the President for signing 1106 and the original Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) legislation. This progresses the project forward. Chair Pruhs hopes to conduct a winter program on the geotech work only, and begin the slow-rolling ball. There were no other comments or questions.

A roll call was taken, and the motion to approve Resolution G25-09 passed unanimously, with Mr. Fogle absent.

6C. FY 2025 AIDEA Audited Financials Statements (Adoption by Motion)

Chair Pruhs indicated that Item 6C. will be postponed until the next Board meeting, during which time the auditors will be in attendance to discuss the audit findings. There was no objection.

7. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

7A. Project Updates

Mr. Ruaro commented that there are updates for several projects. The first project of discussion was the Ambler Road Project. AIDEA brought an appeal under ANILCA of the Biden Administration's decision to deny access and to deny permits to the project. Mr. Ruaro explained that Senator Stevens was responsible for including language in the ANILCA legislation that gives persons who had been denied access by a federal agency the right to appeal directly to the President. The AIDEA appeal was taken to President Trump, and he agreed and granted AIDEA the appeal which resulted in the right-of-way and all federal permits. AIDEA is proceeding as fast as possible to complete field work and other geotech work. Mr. Ruaro looks forward to

building the project and to unlocking resources and revenue for Alaskans from development, particularly jobs for the communities nearest the road, who have mostly passed resolutions of support. He noted support for the project from Allakaket, Hughes, Shugnak, and other communities. Mr. Ruaro commented that the road will allow the whole mining area to move forward and will probably provide generations of good paying jobs with the average wage of a mining job at \$134,000 a year. He noted this is a very good, family-paying wage, and is important for the communities near the road.

Chair Pruhs asked if that wage reflects a work schedule of two weeks on and two weeks off that workers can go back to their communities. Mr. Ruaro agreed, and commented that the off time gives workers an opportunity to practice subsistence and other things. Mr. Ruaro noted that this will also help gap fill jobs and revenue from the decline of Red Dog Mine, which is anticipated to run out of ore in approximately 2031. The gradual decline is anticipated to begin in 2027.

The second project update of discussion was the West Susitna Access Project. AIDEA has filed the Corps permit. A review of the federal wetlands jurisdictional presence has been conducted. The 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision narrowed the scope of federal wetlands jurisdictions by approximately 90%. A navigable river or lake must be present before the feds can assert authority over the land. This is an important issue, not only in terms of the scope of federal wetlands jurisdiction, but in terms of which entity, the feds or the state, get to decide how those lands and waters are used. The pendulum has now shifted far to the state being the one who makes those decisions. AIDEA will continue working with the Corps and with the state regarding that jurisdictional purview. Mr. Ruaro looks forward to advancing the project as rapidly as reasonably and legally as possible.

The third project update of discussion was the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) leases. AIDEA performed a significant amount of geologic review, which are estimated to have billions of barrels of oils on those leases and trillions of cubic feet of gas. Congress passed the Reconciliation Bill which changes the revenue split to a 70/30 in favor of the state, from a previous 50/50 split. The potential annual revenue from the ANWR coastal plain leases is now about \$2 billion a year, if everything was developed and operational. Mr. Ruaro indicated that this is a very significant amount of potential revenue for the state. Part of those royalties would be deposited into the Permanent Fund annually, which would allow significant growth to the Permanent Fund. There were no comments or questions.

7B. Loan Dashboard Report

Mr. Ruaro requested that Tiffany Janssen, AIDEA Chief Loan Officer, provide the Loan Dashboard Report. Ms. Janssen indicated that the report has no real updates. Work continues on the modifications and the one delinquency this year. She noted the projects that are in preparation, one of which should be brought before the Committee within the next couple of weeks. Additionally, there are large potential projects coming through that have been presented to the Board within their confidential pipeline.

Chair Pruhs asked if those large potential projects have been sponsored and approved by any banks. Ms. Janssen agreed. She explained that these larger projects are currently at the lenders

undergoing the due diligence. She has spoken with a couple of the borrowers and anticipates the projects will come before the Board within the next six months. Chair Pruhs asked for the estimated economic volume and dollar amount. Ms. Janssen believes that the current projected achievement for the loans is approximately \$40 million. Chair Pruhs commented that in his mind, he would set that amount as encumbered until further notice.

Mr. Eledge requested clarification if he understood correctly that the delinquency would hopefully be resolved this month. Ms. Janssen agreed, and clarified that she will meet with the lender again on Friday to discuss the final modification documents. Information was received this week and allows for the process to move forward. Mr. Eledge asked if AIDEA would be made whole. Ms. Janssen noted there will be a modification, but in the end, AIDEA should be made whole with the payments to be made. There were no other questions.

7C. Statistics Summary

Mr. Ruaro discussed that the Statistics Summary reflects the two programs that are managed by Commerce: Small Business Economic Development (SBED) Loan Program, and Rural Development Initiative Fund. The SBED has approximately \$13 million in outstanding loans with 50 total borrowers and no delinquencies. The average loan is approximately \$300,000. Mr. Ruaro indicated that the Director of the Division of Investments may attend the next meeting to discuss the capital needs of the SBED. There is interest in the program from three additional borrowers.

Chair Pruhs asked for a clarification on the mechanics of the program regarding AIDEA's financial involvement. Mr. Ruaro explained that the program is transferred to Division of Investments. The interest returns to the loan fund, not to AIDEA. The Division of Commerce is paying the cost of running the program. Chair Pruhs asked if the principal is returned to AIDEA. Mr. Ruaro believes the payments from the borrowers is returned entirely back into the program to provide additional loans. Chair Pruhs asked how long the program has been in place. An unidentified speaker indicated it has been in place since the 1980's. Chair Pruhs asked when the last time AIDEA contributed seed money. Mr. Ruaro believes it has been at least 10 to 15 years. Chair Pruhs asked how this program is carried in AIDEA's books. Mr. Ruaro asked Jean Kornmuller, AIDEA Chief Finance Officer, if she has an answer on where the SBED Program funds are carried on the financial statements. Ms. Kornmuller explained that the cash balances of the SBED Program are including in AIDEA's current cash balance. The loan balances are in AIDEA's loan portfolio. She explained that the other Division services, the loans and AIDEA retains all of the records, and it is not reflected on the dashboard.

Chair Pruhs commented that the configuration described does not make sense to him. He asked if there is an anticipation that any of the dollars would be returned to AIDEA. Mr. Ruaro believes that some dollars could come back to AIDEA, but the original resolution would have to be modified to alter the management of the funds from the Division of Investments. Chair Pruhs discussed the importance of how the program is reflected on AIDEA's books. He commented on the possibility of writing the funds off the books if the funds will not come back to AIDEA.

An unidentified speaker explained that this is an AIDEA program that AIDEA has requested the

Department of Commerce to administer because the amounts are significantly smaller than the funding AIDEA normally administers. The program is incredibly successful and has a really low delinquency rate. The program serves an important function as an economic driver. She noted that the AIDEA team currently does not have the resources to manage the program, and that the Division of Investments is managing this AIDEA program.

Chair Pruhs expressed his opinion that the program should not be on AIDEA's books since AIDEA will never get the money back.

The unidentified speaker explained that the money is coming back and then being loaned out again.

Chair Pruhs asked if interest is charged on the loans. Mr. Ruaro agreed interest is charged on the loans. Chair Pruhs asked if the interest goes directly back into the fund. Mr. Ruaro agreed. Chair Pruhs commented that he believes if the interest came back to AIDEA, the program would be a viable loan, but if AIDEA never sees the interest, then the resolution needs to be reviewed. Chair Pruhs believes there is a challenge on how AIDEA is reporting the program on the books.

An unidentified speaker commented that the conversation regarding how to report the program on AIDEA's books should be discussed by the Board. However, the recapitalization of a really important program also needs to be discussed.

Chair Pruhs stated that the validity of the program is irrelevant to how it is reflected on AIDEA's books. Those are two separate elements. He does not question the validity and benefits of the program. It is a restricted non-performing asset that revolves, and AIDEA does not see any benefit from it, other than its name is on AIDEA's program.

Mr. Ruaro commented that staff could circulate the previous resolution and the pages from the financial statements that show how it is reflected on AIDEA's books. The members can review that information and continue discussion at the next meeting.

An unidentified speaker noted that there is a column showing the income statement for the program in the handouts. There were no other questions.

7D. Next AIDEA Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Chair Pruhs advised of the likelihood of a November meeting. The date is to be determined based on member polling. There were no questions.

8. BOARD COMMENTS

Vice-Chair Kendig expressed appreciation to staff for their work. He congratulated the new comptroller on his successful negotiations with BDO.

Mr. Smyth echoed the comments. He thanked staff for their efforts on the financial statements. He encouraged AIDEA to keep up the pace.

Mr. Eledge commented that AIDEA continues to be the catalyst for responsible resource development, as evidenced by the passage of today's resolution to move forward with the Ambler Access Project funding. He expressed appreciation to staff for their due diligence thus far. Mr. Eledge noted that the current federal administration and the state administration are totally supportive of these efforts.

Chair Pruhs requested Mr. Ruaro comment on the public testimony given today regarding the Ambler Access Project. Mr. Ruaro commented that the Ambler Access Road was discussed as if it were a discretionary action that the federal government could choose whether or not to grant access. However, federal statute in Section 201 Sub 4, 1110 B, 1323 B, and 1326 of ANILCA contain provisions that guarantee and mandate access to state lands and to the Ambler Mining District. It was never a discretionary decision. When the Biden Administration cancelled the access rights, they were out of bounds, and he believes that President Trump has now corrected that with his Executive Order.

Mr. Ruaro continued his comments that all Alaskans own an equal interest in Alaska state lands under the Alaska Constitution, and thus, all Alaskans will benefit from the project as stated in the resolution. There will be jobs, royalties, mining license fees, corporate income taxes, and other funds that will be paid into the treasury at times when the treasury is very low. This will help support all of the programs of the state, including education, Medicaid, Department of Transportation, and others. When resource development provides that type of revenue, all Alaskans do benefit from their equal ownership in the land. Mr. Ruaro added that the local communities and Tribes that AIDEA has worked with, including six communities closest to the road, have provided resolutions in support of the road. The Tribes and communities support the road and provided the reason for their support is that they are tired of poverty. They want jobs. They want a better standard of living. They want disposable income, and they are willing to work for it. They also look forward to contract opportunities, if they are small businesses, similar to the opportunities provided from Red Dog Mine.

Mr. Ruaro discussed that Red Dog Mine is the example for the project. The Subsistence Committee has adopted standards that are stricter than Red Dog Mine, in terms of protecting fish and game from impacts from the road. Mr. Ruaro believes the project is on a good track. Staff is communicating and consulting with the locals in the region. He noted that his comments provide a factual disagreement and policy disagreement to some of the public comments this morning. There were no questions.

Chair Pruhs commented that he likes the idea of \$130,000 a year for local community members to be able to work half a year and still have the lifestyle to which they are accustomed. Mr. Ruaro agreed that it is a good job.

Chair Pruhs expressed appreciation to everyone for their work and patience today. He believes the programs discussed will benefit Alaska residents and their equity in AIDEA. Chair Pruhs called attention to Alaska's experience with the recent typhoon in Southwest Alaska. He asked AIDEA staff to develop a modified Alaska Ship Program with lending partners to focus on a positive effect for Western Alaska commercial businesses as soon as possible. This could include bridge financing for commercial operations in the affected communities. Mr. Ruaro agreed.

There were no other comments or questions.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board, the AIDEA meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m.



Randy Ruaro, AIDEA Executive Director

Secretary