

IDAHO DATA CENTER PUBLIC GUIDE · GUIDE 5 OF 9

CAMPAIGN MONEY AND PUBLIC DECISIONS

Idaho Utility Campaign Money and Public Decisions

What Idaho Power and its parent company's employee PAC gave, what lawmakers and regulators decided from 2016 to 2026, and how to read the two side by side.

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Public edition · November 2026 · Version 9

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AT A GLANCE

Follow the dates, follow the dollars, and keep them in separate columns

Idaho Power gives directly to Idaho candidates and political committees. A separate federal committee funded by employees of its parent company, IDACORP, gives to federal candidates. Over the same years lawmakers passed data center tax breaks and large-load protections, and regulators decided rate cases. Public records let anyone line these up by date. Timing alone does not prove that a payment bought a vote, a contract or a ruling, and this guide does not claim it does. It shows how to build the timeline yourself and what further evidence a stronger claim would require.

$98,823
148 Idaho contributions under the exact name "Idaho Power Company," Apr. 2023 to Oct. 2026

$156,500
52 federal contributions by IDACORP's employee PAC, 2016 to Sept. 2026

65–3
House vote on the 2026 large-load law; the Senate vote was 34–1

$110M
rate increase approved in 2025, of $199.1 million requested

Inside this guide

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How to read the numbers

FILED means a disclosure report as filed by the donor or recipient. DECISION means a recorded vote or signed commission order. PARTIAL means a period that does not cover a full year; these are striped in charts.

HOW THIS GUIDE WAS CHECKED

All 148 state rows and all 52 federal rows were re-added by year and matched the published totals to the cent. Rate case figures, bill votes and contribution limits were checked against commission orders, the Legislature and the Secretary of State in November 2026. One federal row lists a committee ID that belongs to a different committee; it is flagged, not corrected.

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PART 01

Idaho Power: the company, its growth and its fights

Nearly every data center decision in southern Idaho runs through one company.

Idaho Power sells the electricity for most of southern Idaho. When a data center, a chip plant or a cheese plant wants hundreds of megawatts, Idaho Power negotiates the contract, plans the lines and plants, and asks the PUC to approve the deal. Its political giving, covered in Parts 03 and 04, follows from that.

Idaho Power at a glance

Item	What the record shows
Owner	IDACORP Inc., traded on the New York Stock Exchange as IDA. Headquartered in Boise. Serving customers since 1916. CEO Lisa Grow.
Territory	About 24,000 square miles of southern Idaho and eastern Oregon, mostly along the Snake River and its tributaries.
Customers	More than 660,000 at the end of 2025. About 15,000 more, or 2.2%, in the year ending Sept. 30, 2026.
Power plants	17 hydro plants, including the three-dam Hells Canyon Complex finished in 1968. Three gas plants. Shares of Jim Bridger in Wyoming and North Valmy in Nevada, both being switched from coal to gas.
Peak demand	About 4,000 megawatts. The company counts about 4,000 more megawatts of active large-customer requests and 3,000 more in early talks.
Growth plan	Retail sales growing 8.9% a year through 2032, to about 29,000 gigawatt-hours, in its preliminary 2027 plan. Only signed or funded customers are counted.
Money	Net income of $160.2 million in the third quarter of 2026. Rate base of $5.3 billion after the 2025 rate case, which the company says could top $11 billion by 2030. About $7 billion of construction planned for 2026 through 2030. Allowed return on equity: 9.6%.
Rates	Asked for about 13% ($199.1 million) in 2025. Settled at 7.48% overall, effective Jan. 1, 2026. No rate case filed in 2026. The company says its prices run 20% to 30% below the national average.
Biggest new customers	Meta's data center near Boise began taking power in 2024. Micron's first new chip plant is under construction and a second is planned. A new large-customer contract started paying on June 1, 2026.

IDACORP Form 10-Q for the quarter ended Sept. 30, 2026; IDACORP earnings calls, Feb. 19, Apr. 30 and Oct. 29, 2026; IDACORP, At a Glance and History; Idaho Power, 2025 General Rate Case page.[1]

The fights

- **Who pays for the big customers.** Idaho Power calls its approach "growth pays for growth." Each large customer gets its own contract, which the company calls a tariff of one. The 2026 large load law, Idaho Code § 61-335, wrote that approach into statute and added a nine-month deadline for the PUC to approve each contract. The company's CEO told investors the law matched how it already wrote those contracts.[2]
- **Rooftop solar.** On Dec. 29, 2023, over objections from homeowners, installers and conservation groups, the PUC let Idaho Power stop crediting rooftop solar at the full retail rate and switch to real-time net billing, starting Jan. 1, 2024. In 2025 the company asked to cut the export credit by about 60%. The PUC allowed 31% and froze the rate until 2028.[3]
- **Coal to gas.** Two of Jim Bridger's four units were converted to gas in early 2024, and the company plans to stop burning coal there by the end of 2030. Both North Valmy units are off coal. Customers are

[1] Idaho Legislature Campaign Finance Information, Idaho Power Company donor listing, rows 1–148, captured Nov. 9, 2026.

[2] Federal Election Commission, committee-to-committee bulk data 2016–2026, filer C00083832; FEC financial summary Jan. 1, 2025–Sept. 30, 2026.

[3] IDACORP definitive proxy statements, "Political Advocacy and Lobbying Activities," 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026.

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now paying off the deferred conversion costs, which pushed operating costs up $22.5 million in the third quarter of 2026 alone.[4]

- **Hells Canyon.** The federal license for the three Hells Canyon dams expired in July 2005. The dams have run on year-to-year extensions for 21 years while the company seeks a new license. On July 7, 2026, the PUC ruled that about $315 million Idaho Power spent on relicensing from 2016 through 2025 was prudent, which lets the company ask customers to pay it.[5]
- **New lines.** The 500-kilovolt Boardman to Hemingway line runs from near Melba to Boardman, Oregon. The company expects three new large transmission lines in service by 2028.
- **Wildfire.** The Wildfire Standard of Care Act took effect July 1, 2025. If a utility reasonably follows a PUC-approved wildfire plan, a court presumes it wasn't negligent. The PUC approved Idaho Power's 2026 plan on April 14, 2026.[6]
- **The river.** In 2021 Snake River Waterkeeper sued Idaho Power under the Clean Water Act, claiming oil and grease from Brownlee Dam's turbines reach the Snake and that the newer powerhouse has no discharge permit.[7]

THE WHISTLEBLOWER CASE AND THE "WHISKEY CAUCUS"

In October 2025 two officials fired from the PUC on April 11, 2025, sued the commission in Ada County District Court under Idaho's Whistleblower Act. Maria Barratt-Riley had worked there since 2012 and was executive director. Joshua Haver was a policy strategist. They say the agency is "not independent."

The lawsuit claims the commissioners met one at a time with Avista before it filed a rate case, to stay under the open meeting law's quorum count. It says that on Feb. 6, 2025, Commissioners John Hammond, Edward Lodge and Dayn Hardie had dinner at a Meridian restaurant with former Commissioner Paul Kjellander and Veolia's general manager while Veolia's water rate request was pending. The two say they told the commissioners that meetings with Idaho Power and other utilities had to be posted publicly. It also claims Hammond kept access to a utility information system that commissioners shouldn't use while deciding cases.

The "Whiskey Caucus" was an after-hours gathering hosted by Kjellander at a national utility conference in Washington, D.C. The winner is whoever's bottle empties first. The suit claims a PUC program manager offered a Veolia regulatory executive favorable settlement terms in return for help winning it.

These are allegations. The PUC says it doesn't comment on pending litigation. Veolia says the suit doesn't involve the company. We found no ruling as of November 2026. All three commissioners named in the dinner still sit on the commission.[8]

[4] Idaho Legislature, H.B. 521 (2020) history and roll calls.

[5] IPUC Order No. 36042, Case IPC-E-23-11, Dec. 28, 2023.

[6] IPUC Order No. 36892, Case IPC-E-25-16, Dec. 30, 2025; IPUC news release.

[7] Idaho Code §§ 18-1352, 18-1356, 18-1359, 18-1360, 18-5701, 18-5702, 19-4101, 67-6625 and 74-404, read at legislature.idaho.gov, Nov. 10, 2026.

[8] Idaho Open Meeting Law, Idaho Code §§ 74-204, 74-205, 74-206 and 74-208.

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PART 02

How the Idaho PUC works, and who else has a hand

Three appointed commissioners decide what Idaho Power and the state's other investor-owned utilities can charge and build.

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has three commissioners. The governor appoints them and the Senate confirms them for staggered six-year terms, and no more than two can belong to the same party. As of November 2026 they are President Edward Lodge, John R. Hammond Jr. and Dayn Hardie. The agency runs on fees charged to the utilities and railroads it regulates.[9]

It regulates investor-owned utilities: Idaho Power, Rocky Mountain Power, Avista, Intermountain Gas and private water and phone companies. It doesn't set rates for electric co-ops or city-owned utilities. Its job is to keep rates "just and reasonable," which in practice means letting a utility recover its prudent costs plus a return on its investment, and deciding which customers pay which share.

How a case works

Step	What happens
1. Filing	The utility files an application and gets a case number, like IPC-E-26-07. Every filing is posted on puc.idaho.gov.
2. Procedure	The commission decides how the case will run: written comments only, or a technical hearing with sworn testimony.
3. Staff review	Commission staff (engineers, accountants, economists and attorneys) audit the request and file their own recommendations.
4. Intervenors	Industrial customers, cities, farm and consumer groups and others can join as parties, file testimony and question witnesses.
5. Public comment	Anyone can comment by the deadline. Big cases also get public workshops and hearings around the service area.
6. Order	The commission decides on the record and issues a written order.
7. Review	Any party can ask for reconsideration within 21 days. After that, appeals go straight to the Idaho Supreme Court.

Idaho Code §§ 61-626, 61-627; IDAPA 31.01.01, Rules of Procedure of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission.

Since July 1, 2026, the commission also has to approve or deny every contract to serve a new customer of 50 megawatts or more, within 270 days, after a no harm test of what that customer does to everyone else's rates (§ 61-335). On power, Idaho has more company. Nobody keeps one agreed count. Clean Energy Group's July 2026 tally lists eight states with laws that make data centers and other big customers carry their own power costs: Florida, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas. MultiState adds Alabama and Nebraska. Most states still have nothing like it on the books, though some handle it through their utility commissions instead.[10]

The other agencies with a hand in it

Agency	Its role in power and data centers
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)	Sets the rules for wholesale power sales and interstate transmission, including how big customers connect to the transmission grid.
NERC and WECC	Write and enforce the reliability standards that keep the western grid running.
Bonneville Power Administration	Sells federal hydropower to Idaho's co-ops and city-owned utilities, which the PUC doesn't regulate.

[9] Idaho Public Records Act, Idaho Code §§ 74-102, 74-103, 74-115, 74-116 and 74-117.

[10] Idaho Secretary of State, Campaign Finance Disclosure Manual and City Clerk FAQ; FEC, Contribution limits for 2025–2026.

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Agency	Its role in power and data centers
Idaho Legislature	Writes the laws the PUC applies, like § 61-335 for large customers.
Governor	Appoints the commissioners. The Office of Species, Minerals and Energy Coordination (the old Office of Energy and Mineral Resources) coordinates state energy policy.
Water Resources, Environmental Quality and Lands	Water rights, air permits for generators and power plants, and leases on state land.
Counties and cities	Decide where a data center or power plant can go.

Guide 7 lays out every federal, state and local office involved, in more detail. Part 01 covers the 2025 whistleblower lawsuit by two fired PUC officials.

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PART 03

How campaign money works, from the county to Congress

The rules change at every level of government, and so do the places you look.

The rules at each level

Level	Who's covered	Limits	Where to look
Local	County, city, school and special district candidates and local PACs	$1,000 per election from any one person, business or PAC to a county, city or special district candidate. Local candidates start filing once they raise or spend $500.	Idaho Sunshine portal, since 2020. Complaints go to the county clerk.
State	Legislators, statewide officials and state PACs	$1,000 per election to a legislative candidate. $5,000 per election to a statewide candidate. No limit on gifts to PACs or parties. Gifts of $1,000 or more reported within 48 hours.	sunshine.voteidaho.gov
Federal	Congress, president, federal PACs and super PACs	$3,500 per election from a person to a candidate. $5,000 per election from a PAC. $5,000 a year from a person to a PAC. Companies and unions can't give to candidates directly. Super PACs take unlimited money.	Federal Election Commission, fec.gov

Idaho Code §§ 67-6602, 67-6607, 67-6608, 67-6610A; Federal Election Commission contribution limits for 2025–2026. The three PUC commissioners are appointed, not elected, and don't take campaign money as commissioners.[11]

PACs, super PACs and dark money

- **PAC.** A political action committee pools money and gives it to candidates, inside the limits above. It reports its donors and spending. A company can run one funded by its employees, like IDACORP's IDA-PAC.
- **Super PAC.** Can raise and spend unlimited money, corporate money included, as long as it doesn't coordinate with a candidate. Courts opened that door in 2010 with Citizens United and SpeechNow.org. A super PAC reports its donors.
- **Dark money.** Spending by groups that don't have to name their donors, usually nonprofits organized under sections 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) of the tax code. When one of them gives to a super PAC, the report shows only the nonprofit's name, and the real donor drops out of sight.
- **Independent expenditure.** Ads, mailers or texts for or against a candidate, paid for by someone other than the campaign. In Idaho, anyone spending more than $100 on electioneering communications has to report it to the Secretary of State.

Outside money now outspends the candidates in Idaho's legislative races. In 2024 legislative campaigns spent about $7 million, while PACs and others spent more than $9 million in independent expenditures.[12] In the May 2026 primary, independent spending reached $3.99 million, up 16% from 2024. Some of it passed through several PACs, or came from out-of-state federal PACs that report only to the FEC, before it reached a mailbox.[13]

[11] Idaho Press, "After major spending in 2024 elections, updates to Idaho's Sunshine laws are in the works," Jan. 2025, citing Secretary of State data.

[12] Idaho Education News, "PAC spending: Winners and losers from the May primary," 2026; Idaho Capital Sun, "Idaho PACs spent more than $4.2M on primary races," June 23, 2026.

[13] Public Citizen, "Corporations Pour Record-Smashing $737 Million Into 2026 Midterms," Oct. 30, 2026; Fast Company, "The midterms weren't the rebuke of AI money many expected," Nov. 5, 2026; Axios, Sept. 23, 2025, and New York Times reporting summarized by GV Wire, Feb. 18, 2026 (Meta); Energy and Policy Institute, Oct. 22, 2026 (utility PACs); Purchasing Policy analysis of FEC filings, 2026 (cloud company PACs).

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The biggest federal players in 2026, with data and energy groups marked

Group	Tied to	2026 money, as reported	Who it backs
MAGA Inc.	President Trump's political operation	$141 million from corporations	Republicans
Fairshake, Protect Progress and Defend American Jobs	Crypto: Coinbase, Ripple, Andreessen Horowitz	About $154 million spent	87 candidates in both parties. $36.8 million backing Jon Husted in Ohio's Senate race, which he lost.
Leading the Future, Think Big and American Mission (DATA AND AI)	Andreessen Horowitz, OpenAI president Greg Brockman, Joe Lonsdale	$34.8 million spent. $50 million from Andreessen Horowitz.	34 Republicans and 16 Democrats. Spent against one candidate, Alex Bores of New York.
Public First network (DATA AND AI)	Anthropic gave it $20 million	$24.4 million spent	8 Republicans and 5 Democrats. About $13 million backing Alex Bores, who lost his primary.
Meta's super PACs (DATA AND AI)	Meta: American Technology Excellence Project, Forge the Future Project, Making Our Tomorrow and a California PAC	$45 million into its national state-races PAC. A $65 million 2026 plan was reported.	State legislative candidates in both parties who oppose state AI rules, starting in Texas and Illinois
Senate Leadership Fund and Congressional Leadership Fund	Republican leadership in Congress	$48.8 million and $41.3 million from corporations	Republican Senate and House candidates
Utility industry PACs (ENERGY)	Investor-owned utilities and the Edison Electric Institute's PowerPAC ($636,500)	$11.5 million to congressional campaigns	About 62% Republican, 38% Democratic. Top recipients: House Energy and Commerce chair Brett Guthrie and Ways and Means chair Jason Smith.
Cloud company PACs (DATA)	Employee PACs of Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Meta and Oracle	Google $1.51M, Microsoft $1.36M, Amazon $1.35M, Meta $434K, Oracle $310K to candidates, Jan. 2025 to Aug. 2026	Members of Congress in both parties

Figures are as each source reported them in late 2026 and measure different things: money raised, money spent, or money given by corporations. They can't be added together.[14]

The biggest Idaho PACs in 2026, with data and energy groups marked

Idaho's PACs file with the Secretary of State, except federal ones like Make Liberty Win, which report only to the FEC. Much of the money moves from PAC to PAC before it is spent. None of the 2026 news reports on these PACs' top donors names a data center company. Meta, which is building the state's biggest data center, has made its case through lobbyists at the Statehouse.

Group	Tied to	2026 money, as reported	Who it backs
Defend and Protect Idaho	Founded in 2022 by retired Ada County Sheriff Gary Raney. $350,000 from Way Back PAC, a Wyoming federal PAC, and $90,000 from developer Caleb Roope.	$751,017 in primary independent spending: $268,463 for candidates, $482,554 against	Mainstream Republicans. Backed Jim Guthrie, Ben Fuhriman, Stephanie Mickelsen and Mike Veile, who won. Opposed Dan Foreman, Josh Keyser and Christy Zito.

[14] Idaho Education News, "PAC spending: Winners and losers from the May primary," 2026, and "PAC spending reveals top three battleground seats for Republicans," Oct. 26, 2026; Idaho Capital Sun, "Idaho PACs spent more than $4.2M on primary races," June 23, 2026, and May 11, 2026; Idaho Secretary of State, Idaho Prosperity Fund 2019 annual report (Idaho Power $12,000); East Idaho News, May 2026 district funding reports; Spokesman-Review, Mar. 26, 2025, and Coeur d'Alene Press, July 31, 2026 (Meta lobbying).

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Group	Tied to	2026 money, as reported	Who it backs
Idaho Victory Fund and Idaho Liberty PAC (ENERGY)	Gov. Brad Little's PAC. Its donors include Idaho Power, St. Luke's and Caleb Roope. It has passed $1.43 million to Idaho Liberty PAC since 2023.	$576,636 in the primary. $25,000 in the general.	Mainstream Republicans. $110,041 for Sen. Jim Guthrie. Also Brent Reinke, Brian Beckley, Debbie Geyer, Cherie Vollmer and Casey Swensen, and Desi Burbank in November.
Make Liberty Win	Virginia federal super PAC tied to Young Americans for Liberty. Reports only to the FEC.	$511,040 in the primary	Hardline Republicans. Christy Zito, Clint Hostetler and Kent Marmon won. Spent against Guthrie, Veile and Marco Erickson.
Citizens Alliance of Idaho PAC	About $506,000 from the Virginia-based Citizens Alliance PAC	$506,757 in the primary	38 hardline Republicans, 19 of whom won, among them Josh Keyser, Steve Tanner, Elaine Price and Barbara Ehardt
36-18-1 PAC	Rep. Jordan Redman, R-Post Falls, who gave it $250,000 of his own money	$325,783 in the primary. $15,625 in the general.	26 Republicans in the primary. Dustin Manwaring, Mike Pohanka and Desi Burbank in November.
Idaho Summit PAC	Chaired by Rep. Josh Tanner. $200,000 from Boise businessman Joe Russell.	$217,757 in the primary	21 hardline Republicans, 12 of whom won, led by Scott Herndon
AFC Victory Fund	American Federation for Children's national school choice super PAC	$105,517 in the primary	Lori Den Hartog, Josh Keyser and Jason Monks. Spent against Melissa Durrant and Megan Blanksma.
Idaho Prosperity Fund (ENERGY)	Political arm of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry. Idaho Power has given to it ($12,000 in 2019).	$32,960 in the general. Primary spending included about $72,000 for Guthrie.	Business-backed Republicans: Guthrie, Ben Fuhriman, Kelly VanOrden, Mike Pohanka, Desi Burbank
Idaho Realtors PAC	Idaho Realtors	$52,634 in the general	Desi Burbank and Dustin Manwaring
Idaho Rising PAC	House Speaker Mike Moyle	$44,696 in the general	Mike Pohanka and Dustin Manwaring
Hometown Heroes and Idaho First	Carry Way Back PAC money. Rep. Britt Raybould and Sen. Van Burtenshaw gave to Hometown Heroes.	More than $65,000 from Hometown Heroes to Defend and Protect Idaho	The same mainstream Republicans as Defend and Protect Idaho
Idaho Power and IDA-PAC (ENERGY)	Idaho Power Company and IDACORP employees	$98,823 state (Apr. 2023 to Oct. 2026); $156,500 federal (2016 to Sept. 2026)	Legislative candidates, leaders of both chambers and Idaho's congressional delegation (Part 04)

Primary figures are independent expenditures in the May 19, 2026 primary. General figures cover Sept. 1 to Oct. 26, 2026. ENERGY marks a utility or a PAC that utility money flows into.[15]

HOW TO TRACE IT YOURSELF

Search by the PAC′s name as well as the company′s, on Idaho Sunshine for state and local races and on FEC.gov for federal ones. When a PAC′s money comes from another committee, open that committee′s report too. Keep going until you reach a person, a company or a nonprofit that doesn′t have to say who funds it. That last stop is where dark money hides.

[15] IDACORP Inc., Form 10-Q, Sept. 30, 2026, and Form 8-K, Oct. 29, 2026 (SEC EDGAR); IDACORP fourth-quarter 2025, first-quarter 2026 and third-quarter 2026 earnings calls as reported by MarketBeat, The Motley Fool and Earnings Whispers; idacorpinc.com; idahopower.com; Energy Central, "Idaho Power Is Building Faster Than Its Rate Base Can Reset," Sept. 11, 2026 (9.6% return on equity).

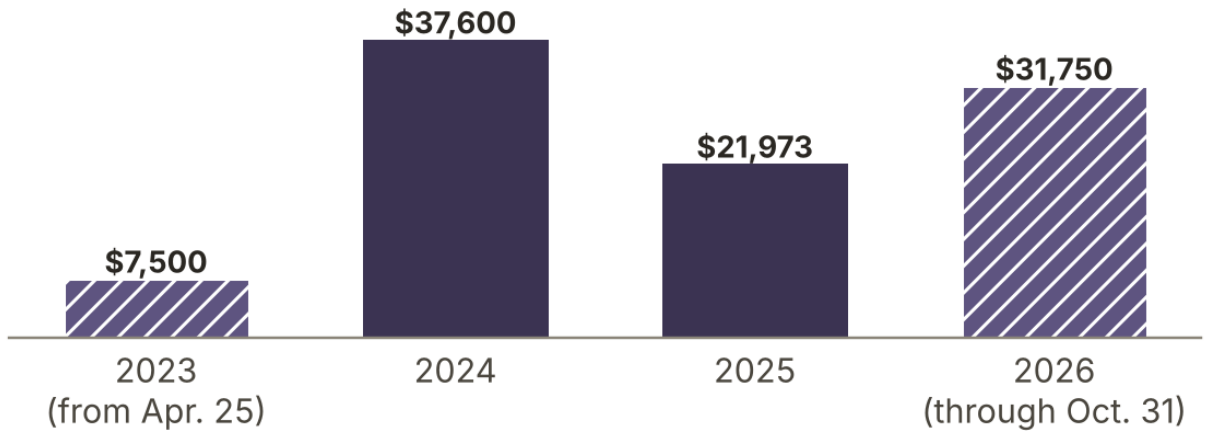
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PART 04

What the contribution records show

Idaho Power Company, state contributions

FILED · Contributions listed under the exact donor name "Idaho Power Company"

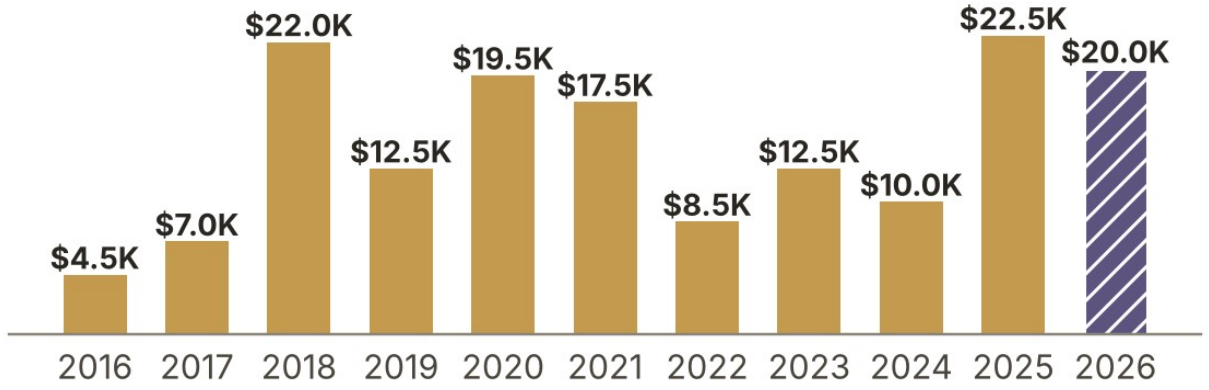


148 rows totaling $98,822.91, grouped by the transaction date shown. Source: Idaho Legislature campaign finance mirror, captured Nov. 9, 2026. Striped years are partial. Other spellings and separately named committees are not included.[16]

Most gifts were $250 to $1,000 to individual legislative candidates, plus larger gifts to political committees, such as $2,500 to Gem State Legacy PAC on Jan. 4, 2025 and $1,000 to the Senate Republican PAC of Idaho on Jan. 9, 2025. A payment to a committee shows only who received it first. Saying it reached a particular candidate takes a separate record of that transfer.

IDACORP's employee PAC, federal contributions

FILED · IDA-PAC contributions to federal candidates and committees



52 entries, $156,500 net, from Federal Election Commission bulk files for committee C00083832, transaction code 24K. 2026 runs through Sept. 30. Two July 2021 entries of −$2,500 and +$2,500 cancel out.[17]

Recipients include Idaho's members of Congress, out-of-state candidates and other PACs, among them $5,000 to the Edison Electric Institute's PowerPAC in January 2025. The employee PAC is a separate legal

[16] IDACORP first-quarter 2026 earnings call, Apr. 30, 2026; IDACORP fourth-quarter 2025 earnings call, Feb. 19, 2026.

[17] Idaho Statesman via TechXplore, Jan. 2024; Idaho Capital Sun, Oct. 14, 2025; Vote Solar, petition for reconsideration, 2025.

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entity from the utility. Under federal law, a corporation may not give from its own treasury to federal candidates, but its employee PAC may, within limits.

PART 05

What the company told shareholders

IDACORP's proxy statements report political giving each year. Early years cover two-year election cycles; later ones cover single years. The federal PAC amounts match the FEC files for every period that overlaps.[18]

Period	PACs at all levels (approx.)	Of that, federal IDA-PAC	State candidates
2019–2020 cycle	**$68,000**	**$32,000**	$109,000 Idaho and Oregon combined
2021–2022 cycle	**$106,500**	**$26,000**	$127,000 Idaho and Oregon combined
2023	**$81,000**	**$12,500**	$39,500 Idaho and Oregon combined
2024	**$41,200**	**$10,000**	$61,854 Idaho; $23,000 Oregon
2025	**$66,600**	**$22,500**	$49,750 Idaho; $17,000 Oregon

The company says it gives to candidates of both major parties and reports lobbying separately. Whether any political spending reached customer rates is a different question. Federal accounting rules put political expenses in a separate account (FERC Account 426.4) that is normally kept out of rates; confirming that takes the utility's rate-case records, not campaign reports.

Idaho's rules on giving

Rule	Limit or requirement
Gift to a legislative candidate	$1,000 for the primary and $1,000 for the general election, from a person, company or PAC
Gift to a statewide candidate	$5,000 per election
County or state party committee to a legislative candidate	$2,000 per election
Gift to a PAC or party committee	No general dollar limit
Large gifts	Any gift of $1,000 or more must be reported within 48 hours
Hidden sources	Giving through another person to hide the true source is illegal (§ 67-6614)

Idaho Code §§ 67-6607, 67-6610A, 67-6614; Idaho Secretary of State contribution limits.

PART 06

The public decisions, 2020 to 2026

When	Decision	What it did
Mar. 2020	Legislature, H.B. 521. House 37–21, Senate 30–1. Signed Mar. 30.[19]	Created the data center sales tax exemption ($250 million invested, 30 jobs).
June 2022	Commission Order 35428	Approved Schedule 20 for speculative high-density loads, priced at marginal cost.

[18] Idaho Power, "Our Path Away from Coal"; IDACORP Form 10-Q, Sept. 30, 2026.

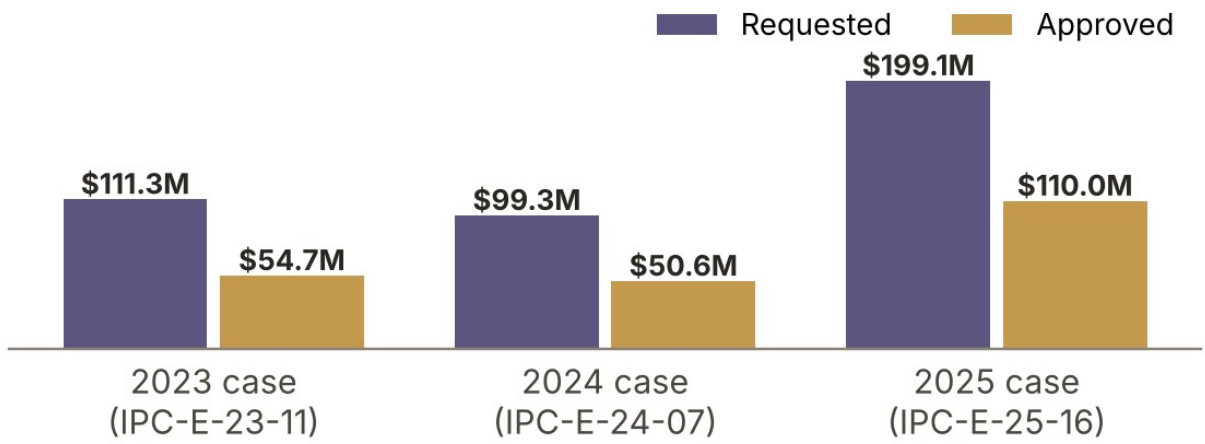
[19] Idaho Power, Relicensing the Hells Canyon Complex; PUC Order No. 37087, Case IPC-E-25-35, July 7, 2026; FERC final supplemental environmental impact statement, Federal Register, Sept. 10, 2026.

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When	Decision	What it did
May 2023	Commission Order 35777	Approved, with changes, the special contract for Meta's project company, Brisbie LLC.
Dec. 2023	Commission Order 36042 (Anderson, Hammond, Lodge)	Approved $54.7 million (4.25%) of a $111.3 million request.[20]
Dec. 2024	Commission Order 36438	Approved $50.1 million (3.68% of base revenue, after a Jan. 21, 2025 correction) of $99.29 million requested.
Dec. 2025	Commission Order 36892 (Lodge, Hammond, Hardie)	Approved $110 million (7.48%) of $199.1 million (13.09%); 9.6% return on equity.[21]
Mar.–Apr. 2026	Legislature, H.B. 911. House 65–3, Senate 34–1. Signed Apr. 10.	Large-load law: 50 MW trigger, full cost of service, security against stranded costs.
Mar.–Apr. 2026	Legislature, H.B. 895. House 58–10, Senate 32–1. Signed Apr. 2.	Water law: a data center starting construction on or after July 1, 2026 can't use up water for cooling unless it comes from a city, water district or water and sewer district system.
Mar.–Apr. 2026	Legislature, H.B. 897. House 68–0; Senate 34–0, amended. Never returned to the House floor.	Would have narrowed the 2020 data center tax breaks and required yearly reporting of uncollected sales tax. Died when the session ended.

DECISION · Idaho Power rate increases requested and approved



Annual Idaho revenue in millions. Percentages are system averages; any one household's change depends on its rate class and usage. The 2023 figure is net of a $168.3 million power cost decrease.

PART 07

What Idaho law forbids, and what it lets you see

Idaho has laws against buying official action, and tools for watching how decisions get made.

The law	What it forbids	The penalty
Bribery (§ 18-1352)	Offering, giving, asking for or taking any money benefit in exchange for an official's vote, decision or other use of official power.	A felony. The official can also be made to give up the office and pay back what was received (§ 18-1360).

[20] Idaho Code § 61-1801 et seq. (S.B. 1183, 2025); PUC Order No. 37004, Case IPC-E-25-32, and news release, Apr. 14, 2026.

[21] Snake River Waterkeeper and Law360, June 25, 2021; Boise State Public Radio, June 25, 2021.

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The law	What it forbids	The penalty
Gifts and personal gain (§§ 18-1356, 18-1359)	A regulator, lawmaker or contract official taking a money benefit from someone with business before them, or any official using public money, inside information or a contract stake for private gain. Gifts under $50 and reported lobbying costs are exempt.	A misdemeanor: up to $1,000 and up to a year in jail, plus possible loss of office and repayment (§ 18-1360).
Misusing public money (§§ 18-5701, 18-5702)	Spending, lending or profiting from public money without legal authority, or keeping false accounts.	For $300 or more, a felony with up to 14 years in prison and a $10,000 fine.
Conflicts of interest (§ 74-404)	Acting on a matter where the official has a personal financial stake without first disclosing it.	Must disclose before acting. Elected lawmakers may still vote after disclosing.
Campaign finance reporting (§ 67-6625)	Breaking the Sunshine Law's reporting and contribution rules.	Civil fine up to $250 for a person or $2,500 for a group. Knowing violations are a misdemeanor with up to 6 months in jail. Charges must be filed within 2 years.
Removal from office (§ 19-4101)	Willful or corrupt misconduct by a local officer.	A county grand jury can bring a written accusation to remove the officer.

None of these laws makes a lawful, reported campaign contribution a crime. The line is crossed when something of value is exchanged for official action, or when it is hidden.[22]

Open Meeting Law: decisions have to be made in public

- **Notice.** A regular meeting needs 5 days′ notice and an agenda posted 48 hours ahead, online if the body has a website. Any item that needs a vote must be labeled an action item. A special meeting needs 24 hours′ notice.
- **Closed-door sessions are limited.** An executive session needs a two-thirds roll-call vote that names the exact part of the law allowing it. The reasons are narrow, such as personnel, buying property and pending lawsuits. No final decision can be made behind closed doors.
- **Minutes.** Every meeting needs written minutes showing who attended, every motion and the result of every vote.
- **If the law is broken,** the action is void if someone sues within 30 days. Members face civil fines of up to $250, up to $1,500 for a knowing violation, and up to $2,500 for a repeat within 12 months. The county prosecutor enforces it locally, and a special prosecutor is appointed when the county commissioners themselves are accused.[23]

Public Records Act: Idaho's version of FOIA

The federal Freedom of Information Act covers only federal agencies. For Idaho state and local governments, the law is the Idaho Public Records Act. Send your request to the agency′s records custodian and say plainly that it is a public records request. The agency must answer an Idaho resident within 3 working days, or within 10 working days if it tells you in writing it needs more time. No answer counts as a denial. Residents pay nothing for the first 2 hours of staff time or the first 100 pages, and the agency generally can′t ask why you want them. If you′re turned down, you can take it to district court within 180 days. A judge can fine an official up to $1,000 for refusing a legitimate request in bad faith.[24]

[22] Idaho Statesman, "2 high-ranking officials ousted from Idaho Public Utilities Commission say agency is 'not independent,'" Nov. 18, 2025, as republished by East Idaho News; PUC decision meeting minutes, 2026.

[23] Idaho Code § 61-201; Idaho Public Utilities Commission, "About" and "Commissioners," puc.idaho.gov; IPUC 2025 Annual Report.

[24] Quorum, Oct. 26, 2026; Clean Energy Group, "States are stepping up to protect households from rising energy bills due to data centers," 2026; Edison Electric Institute tariff count as reported by Environment+Energy Leader, 2026; MultiState, June 4, 2026.

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PART 08

What timing can and cannot prove

A dated gift and a dated vote can be placed on the same line. That opens a question. It does not answer it.

As an example of the method, the state records show $1,000 each from Idaho Power Company to House Speaker Mike Moyle (June 16, 2025), Sen. Todd Lakey (July 5, 2025) and Senate President Pro Tem Kelly Anthon (Sept. 3, 2025). All three voted for H.B. 911 in March 2026. So did nearly everyone else: the bill passed with only four no votes across both chambers. A vote with that much support tells you little about influence. Gifts made in October 2026, after the vote, cannot be counted as gifts before it.

KEEP THESE ACTORS APART

Legislators vote on bills. **Commissioners** sign rate orders; they are appointed, not elected, and do not receive campaign contributions as commissioners. **Commission staff and intervenors** negotiate and testify. A gift to a legislator does not put that legislator on the commission that sets rates.

What a stronger claim would need

- A complete donor list, including name variations and affiliates, checked against original and amended filings.
- Every legislator compared, not a selected few, using a time window chosen before looking at the results.
- For rate cases, a link from a specific cost in the utility's exhibits to the approved charge.
- For any allegation of coordination or a cost passed to customers, independent evidence of that specific act.

GAPS IN THIS RECORD

The state extract covers only rows displayed under one exact donor name from April 2023 forward. Earlier years, aliases and amended reports still need to be pulled from the Secretary of State's archive. October 2026 monthly reports were not all filed by Nov. 9. One FEC row from Oct. 2018 lists a recipient committee ID that belongs to a different committee.

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PART 09

What you can do

Everything in this guide came from public websites. You can check it, extend it and correct it.

THE STANDARD TO HOLD EVERYONE TO

Government that is accountable has nothing to hide. Every gift reported on time and searchable, every vote recorded, every rate order explained, and no customer dollars spent on politics.

Look it up yourself

- ☐ Search Idaho's Sunshine portal for any donor or candidate, and download the reports.
- ☐ Search the FEC for committee C00083832 (IDA-PAC) and any federal candidate.
- ☐ Look up any bill on the Legislature's site to see sponsors, amendments and every recorded vote.
- ☐ Ask your county or city for meeting minutes, agendas and records under the Public Records Act. Keep a copy of your request and the date you sent it.
- ☐ Search the Public Utilities Commission by case number to read what the company asked for and what the commission approved.
- ☐ Read IDACORP's annual proxy statement on sec.gov for its own summary of political giving and lobbying.

Questions worth asking

- To the company: how are recipients chosen, and what comes from company funds versus the employee PAC?
- To a legislator: what was the policy reason for your vote, and did you receive any original filing that differs from the summary?
- To commission staff: how did the order treat the utility's evidence, and which costs were removed?

TWO SIDES OF THE ARGUMENT, IN FAIRNESS

For tighter rules: a regulated monopoly has a direct financial stake in public decisions. Tighter disclosure or limits on giving by regulated utilities are worth debating, drafted carefully to fit court rulings on political speech.

For lawful participation: a company, its employees and a separate PAC each have their own rights. A dated contribution shows a reported financial relationship, and the public can weigh it alongside disclosure, limits, ethics rules and the actual decision record.

Publish what you find with dates, links and the limits of the evidence. Accusing someone of selling a vote takes proof beyond a gift and a vote.

PART 10

Words to know

Dark money. Political spending by groups that don't have to disclose their donors.

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Executive session. The part of a public meeting closed to the public, allowed only for reasons listed in Idaho Code § 74-206.

Public Records Act. Idaho′s law giving anyone the right to see and copy most government records. Idaho′s version of FOIA.

Open Meeting Law. Idaho's law requiring public bodies to give notice, post agendas, keep minutes and decide things in public.

Contribution. Money or something of value given to a candidate or committee.

Employee PAC. A committee funded by voluntary employee donations; also called a separate segregated fund.

Exact-label extract. Records listed under one exact donor name, with other spellings left out.

Independent expenditure. Election spending made without coordinating with a candidate.

Intervenor. A party allowed to take part in a commission case.

Lobbying disclosure. A separate report about efforts to influence official action.

Proxy statement. A company′s annual filing to shareholders before its annual meeting.

Rate base. The value of a utility′s plants and lines that customers pay a return on.

Rate case. The commission proceeding that sets how much a utility may collect.

Super PAC. A committee that can raise and spend unlimited money if it doesn′t coordinate with candidates.

Whistleblower Act. Idaho law protecting public employees who report waste or violations of law from retaliation.

Where to look it up

Idaho Sunshine portal sunshine.voteidaho.gov State campaign finance reports, searchable by donor or candidate.

Federal Election Commission fec.gov Federal candidate and PAC filings. IDA-PAC is committee C00083832.

Idaho Legislature legislature.idaho.gov Bills, sponsors and roll-call votes.

Idaho Public Utilities Commission puc.idaho.gov Rate case filings, testimony and orders by case number.

Revision history

Revision	Date	What changed
Rev. 1	Nov. 2026	First public edition. Data checked against the source research papers and original records.
Rev. 2	Nov. 9, 2026	Reviewed against Idaho's 2026 laws in force July 1 (H.B. 895 and H.B. 911) and the failed H.B. 897. Series expanded to six guides. Revision history added.
Rev. 3	Nov. 9, 2026	Layout check. A trial page watermark was removed. Earlier versions moved to the Old Revisions folder.
Rev. 4	Nov. 10, 2026	Added a new part on Idaho's anti-corruption laws and penalties, the Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Act, checked against the current Idaho Code.
Rev. 5	Nov. 10, 2026	Added a part on campaign finance at the local, state and federal levels, PACs, super PACs and dark money, and the biggest 2026 players with data and energy groups marked. Added a part on how the PUC works and the role of other agencies. Added H.B. 895 to the timeline and how Idaho compares with other states. Removed a company name from the cover and footer.
Rev. 6	Nov. 11, 2026	Split the biggest-players table into federal and Idaho lists and added the biggest Idaho PACs of 2026, with energy ties marked and who each one backs.
Rev. 7	Nov. 11, 2026	Added a profile of Idaho Power and its main fights, including the 2025 PUC whistleblower lawsuit and the "Whiskey Caucus" claim. Reordered the guide: Idaho Power first, then the PUC, then campaign money.
Rev. 8	Nov. 16, 2026	Fact-check against primary sources and a ChatGPT cross-check. Order 36438 amount corrected to $50.1 million (3.68%) per the commission's Jan. 21, 2025 errata. Public First described by Anthropic's $20 million gift. Replaced the 'about 15 states' count. Series is now nine guides.

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Revision	Date	What changed
v9	Nov. 22, 2026	Cross-guide review against bill histories. H.B. 895, 897 and 911 votes and dates reconfirmed (H.B. 911: House Mar. 20, Senate Mar. 30, signed Apr. 10). Water law wording matches § 42-252. Whistleblower suit filing month and customer count reconfirmed. Version and date stamp added to every page.

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PART 11

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