

Adams Diversified Equity Fund, Inc.

500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

February 18, 2026

To the Stockholders of

ADAMS DIVERSIFIED EQUITY FUND, INC.:

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of ADAMS DIVERSIFIED EQUITY FUND, INC., a Maryland corporation (the "Fund"), will be held at the Fund's offices at 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202, on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., local time, for the following purposes:

- (1) to elect two directors as identified in the Proxy Statement to serve until the annual meeting of stockholders in 2029 and until their successors are duly elected and qualify;
- (2) to ratify the appointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP to serve as the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm to audit the books and accounts of the Fund for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2026; and
- (3) to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof.

The Board of Directors unanimously recommends that
stockholders vote **FOR** Proposals (1) and (2).

Stockholders of record, as shown by the transfer agent's books for the Fund, at the close of business on January 23, 2026 are entitled to notice of and to vote at this meeting. All Stockholders are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting.

By order of the Board of Directors,

Janis F. Kerns

Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary

Baltimore, MD

Note: Stockholders are requested to fill in, sign, date, and return the accompanying proxy in the enclosed envelope without delay or authorize their proxies by telephone or internet as described further in the enclosed materials.

Because access to our building is restricted, please call the Fund at (800) 638-2479 or send an email via adamsfunds.com/contact if you plan to attend the Annual Meeting.

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Adams Diversified Equity Fund, Inc.

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Baltimore, MD 21202

Proxy Statement

INTRODUCTION

The Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Adams Diversified Equity Fund, Inc., a Maryland corporation (the “Fund”), will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., local time, at the Fund’s offices at 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202, for the purposes set forth in the accompanying Notice of Annual Meeting and also set forth below. This proxy statement is furnished in connection with the solicitation by the Board of Directors of proxies to be used at the meeting and at any and all adjournments or postponements thereof and is first being provided to stockholders on or about February 18, 2026.

At the Annual Meeting, action is to be taken on (1) the election of two Class II Directors to the Board of Directors; (2) the ratification of the selection of an independent registered public accounting firm; and (3) the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof.

Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Stockholder Meeting to Be Held on April 16, 2026:

This Proxy Statement, the Notice of Annual Meeting, a form of the proxy, and the 2025 Annual Report to stockholders are all available on the internet at the following website:

<https://www.proxy-direct.com/adamsfunds>

How You May Vote and Voting By Proxy

You can provide voting instructions by using telephone or internet options as instructed in the enclosed proxy card, or by dating, executing, and mailing the proxy card. You may also vote in person at the Annual Meeting; however, even if you intend to do so, **please provide voting instructions by one of the methods described above**. Except for Proposals (1) and (2), referred to above, the proxies confer discretionary authority on the persons named therein or their substitutes with respect to any business that may properly come before the meeting. Stockholders retain the right to revoke executed proxies at any time before they are voted by written notice to the Fund, by executing a later-dated proxy, or by appearing and voting at the meeting. All shares represented at the meeting by proxies in the accompanying form will be voted, provided that such proxies are properly executed. In cases where a choice is indicated, the shares represented will be voted in accordance with the specifications so made. In cases where no specifications are made, the shares represented will be voted **FOR** Proposal (1) and **FOR** Proposal (2).

If your shares are held in the name of a bank, broker, or other holder of record, you will receive instructions from the holder of record that you must follow in order to vote your shares. If your shares are not registered in your own name and you plan to vote your shares in person at the Annual Meeting, you should contact your broker or agent to obtain a broker’s proxy card and bring it with you to the Annual Meeting in order to vote.

If you have questions regarding how to attend the meeting and vote in person, please contact the Secretary of the Fund by telephone at (800) 638-2479 or by email through adamsfunds.com/contact.

Who May Vote

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on January 23, 2026 may vote at the Annual Meeting. The total number of shares of common stock of the Fund ("Common Stock") outstanding and entitled to be voted on the record date was 122,523,888. Each share is entitled to one vote. The Fund has no other class of security outstanding.

Vote Requirement

For Proposal (1), referred to above, directors shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast at the meeting. Proposal (2), referred to above, requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast at the meeting.

Quorum Requirement

A quorum is necessary to hold a valid meeting. If stockholders entitled to cast a majority of all the votes entitled to be cast at the Annual Meeting are present in person or by proxy, a quorum will exist. Proxies received by the Fund that are marked "withhold authority" or abstain, or that constitute a broker non-vote, are counted as present for purposes of establishing a quorum. A broker non-vote occurs when a broker returns a valid proxy but does not vote on a particular matter because the broker does not have the discretionary voting power for that matter and has not received instructions from the beneficial owner. Proxies marked "withhold authority," abstentions, and broker non-votes do not count as votes cast with respect to any proposal, and therefore, such proxies would have no effect on the outcome of Proposals (1) and (2) above.

Appraisal Rights

Under Maryland law, there are no appraisal or other dissenter rights with respect to any matter to be voted on at the Annual Meeting that is described herein.

Other Matters

The Fund will pay all costs of soliciting proxies for the Annual Meeting. Solicitation will be made by mail, and officers, employees, and agents of the Fund may also solicit proxies in person, by telephone, videoconference, email, or other electronic means. The Fund has retained Computershare Inc., operating through its Computershare Fund Services division, to assist in the solicitation of proxies. The Fund will pay Computershare Inc. a fee for its services, not to exceed \$14,000, including expenses. None of the officers or employees will be paid for these services. The Fund expects to request brokers and nominees who hold stock in their names to furnish this proxy material to their customers and to solicit proxies from them, and will reimburse such brokers and nominees for their out-of-pocket and reasonable clerical expenses in connection therewith.

Fund Complex

The Fund is a closed-end investment company that is traded on the New York Stock Exchange and is part of Adams Funds (the "Fund Complex"), which is composed of the Fund and Adams Natural Resources Fund, Inc. ("PEO"), a closed-end investment company that is also traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

Corporate Governance Highlights

Our corporate governance is structured by the Board of Directors with a focus on the best interests of the Fund and its stockholders and in a manner that aligns the interests of the Board and management with stockholders. Key features of this governance framework and the Board's makeup include:

Structure and Independence

- Independent Chair
- Annual Board and committee evaluations
- Independent committee membership
- Risk and strategy oversight by the full Board and committees
- Regular rotation of committee chairs and members
- Policy limiting, and oversight of, overboarding
- Executive session of independent directors at each regular meeting

Succession and Diversity

- Mandatory director retirement age of 75
- Term limit of 15 years
- 3 of 7 directors joined in the last 5 years
- 6 of 7 directors with a background in finance or investing
- Extensive leadership experience; 4 former or current C-Suite officers
- 3 female directors
- 4 of 7 directors 65 years old or younger

Other Best Practices

- 100% attendance at Board and committee meetings in 2025
- Significant Fund stock ownership requirements for directors and senior executives
- Discussions between the Independent Chair and each director supplement annual Board assessments
- Regular director engagement with investment and management teams (open access for directors to all employees)
- Board and committee autonomy to engage independent advisors in their sole discretion

(1) ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The Board currently has seven directors, each of whom will hold office for the term to which he or she was elected and until his or her successor is duly elected and qualified. Pursuant to the Charter, the seven directors are currently divided into three classes: Class I, Class II, and Class III. Each class of directors holds office for a three-year term. The current Class II Directors hold office for a term expiring at the Annual Meeting. The current Class III Directors hold office for a term expiring at the 2027 annual meeting. The current Class I Directors hold office for a term expiring at the 2028 annual meeting. The classes of directors and their respective terms are indicated below:

Class II Directors to Serve Until the 2029 Annual Meeting of Stockholders

Kenneth J. Dale

Mary Chris Jammet

Class III Directors Serving Until the 2027 Annual Meeting of Stockholders

Steven G. Chambers

Frederic A. Escherich

Jane Musser Nelson

Class I Directors Serving Until the 2028 Annual Meeting of Stockholders

Lauriann C. Kloppenburg

James P. Haynie*

*Mr. Haynie, CEO of the Fund, is an interested person of the Fund as defined by the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended.

At the Annual Meeting, stockholders of the Fund are being asked to consider the election of Kenneth J. Dale and Mary Chris Jammet as Class II Directors. They have been nominated for re-election for a three-year term expiring at the 2029 annual meeting of the stockholders. Each nominee has agreed to serve as a director if re-elected and has consented to being named as a nominee. No person being nominated as a director is being proposed for election pursuant to any agreement or understanding between such person and the Fund.

Unless contrary instructions are given by the stockholder signing a proxy, it is the intention of the persons named as proxies to vote such proxy FOR the election of each of the Class II Director nominees named above. However, if either nominee becomes unwilling or unable to serve, the persons named in the accompanying Proxy will vote for the election of such other persons, if any, as the Board may nominate. The Board has no reason to believe that any of the persons named as Class II Director nominees will be unable or unwilling to serve.

The Board of Directors unanimously recommends that stockholders vote FOR the election of each of the Class II Director nominees.

Information as to Nominees for Election as Directors and the Fund's Other Independent Directors and Interested Director

Set forth below with respect to each nominee for director are his or her name, address and age, any positions held with the Fund, other principal occupations, other directorships during the past five years, business affiliations, the year in which he or she first became a director, and the number of shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by him or her. Also set forth below is the number of shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by all the directors and executive officers of the Fund as a group. A separate table is provided showing the dollar-value range of the shares beneficially owned by each director.

Name, Age, Positions with the Fund, Other Principal Occupations and Other Directorships	Has Been a Director Since	Current Term Expires	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Director or Nominee for Director	Shares of Common Stock Beneficially Owned ^{(a)(b)(c)}
Nominees for Class II Directors				
Independent Directors				
Kenneth J. Dale, 69, Chair of the Board and Class II Director. Retired Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of The Associated Press. Formerly, Vice President, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. Inc. Currently, the Chair of the Board and a Class II Director of PEO ^(d) .	2008	2026	2	27,552
Mary Chris Jammet, 58, Class II Director. Principal with Bristol Partners LLC. Previously served as Senior Vice President and Portfolio Manager at Legg Mason, Inc. (now Franklin Templeton). Currently, a Class II Director of PEO ^(d) and a director of Western Alliance Bancorporation.	2020	2026	2	10,316
Class I and III Directors				
Independent Directors				
Lauriann C. Kloppenburg, 65, Class I Director. Retired Chief Strategy Officer and former Chief Investment Officer - Equity Group of Loomis Sayles & Company, L.P. Currently, a Class I Director of PEO ^(d) , a Trustee of Transamerica Funds, of Transamerica Series Trust, and of Transamerica Asset Allocation Variable Funds; an adviser to a family office; and a former Executive in Residence at Champlain College and Hughey Center for Financial Services, Bentley University.	2017	2028	2	16,323
Steven G. Chambers, Ed.L.D., 62, Class III Director. Senior Adviser (AI) to CEO, HMM (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) Corp. Formerly, CMO, Sense, Inc., and prior to that, CEO and Chair of the Board at robotics pioneer JIBO, Inc. Currently, a Class III Director of PEO ^(d) and a director and Board adviser to private natural language/AI communications technology companies.	2026	2027	2	4,275

Name, Age, Positions with the Fund, Other Principal Occupations and Other Directorships	Has Been a Director Since	Current Term Expires	Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex Overseen by Director or Nominee for Director	Shares of Common Stock Beneficially Owned ^{(a)(b)(c)}
Frederic A. Escherich, 73, Class III Director. Private Investor. Formerly, Managing Director and head of Mergers and Acquisitions Research and the Financial Advisory Department of J.P. Morgan & Co. Inc. Currently, a Class III Director of PEO ^(d) .	2006	2027	2	52,512
Jane Musser Nelson, 67, Class III Director. Retired Managing Director, Investments, Cambridge Associates. Currently, a Class III Director of PEO ^(d) and serves on the Board of Trustees of Blue Owl Alternative Credit Fund. Former director of First Eagle Alternative Capital BDC, Inc. and of Alcentra, an asset management subsidiary of BNY Mellon, and currently an adviser to investment firms, foundations, and trusts.	2021	2027	2	6,026
Interested Director				
James P. Haynie, 63, Class I Director and CEO of the Fund. Currently a Class I Director and CEO of PEO ^(d) . Formerly, Chief Investment Officer, U.S. Equities and Global Sector Funds, BNP Paribas Investment Partners.	2023	2028	2	222,797
Directors and executive officers of the Fund as a group.				518,446

- (a) To the Fund's knowledge, except for the shares referred to in footnote (b) below, each director and officer had sole investment and sole voting power with respect to the shares shown opposite his or her name.
- (b) The amounts shown include 10,481 vested but deferred stock units under the Fund's 2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan (see "2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan" below) held by Mr. Dale. No such shares or units were held by any other directors.
- (c) All share information is as of December 31, 2025, except for Dr. Chambers, whose share balance is as of February 12, 2026. Calculated on the basis of 122,535,119 shares of Common Stock outstanding on December 31, 2025, each director owned less than 1.0% of the Common Stock outstanding. The directors and executive officers as a group owned less than 1.0% of the Common Stock outstanding. The share information for the other executive officers appears on page eleven of this Proxy Statement.
- (d) Non-controlled affiliate of the Fund (a closed-end investment company), which is part of the Fund Complex. The length of the PEO Board service is identical to the period served for the Fund.

The address for each director is the Fund's headquarters office, 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202.

Additional information about each director follows, supplementing the information in the table above and describing some of the specific experience, qualifications, attributes, or skills each director possesses that led the Board to conclude he or she should serve as a director.

Independent Directors

1) Kenneth J. Dale

Mr. Dale has served as the Chair of the Fund's Board of Directors since April 21, 2022. Mr. Dale brings broad expertise in financial management to the Board. He served as Senior Vice President and

Chief Financial Officer of The Associated Press (“AP”), one of the largest newsgathering organizations in the world, from 2004 through 2024. His responsibilities at AP included all corporate finance activities, internal audit, global real estate, administrative services, and oversight of AP’s software business, ENPS. Prior to joining AP, Mr. Dale spent 21 years as an investment banker at J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. Inc., advising media and entertainment clients on mergers and acquisitions and corporate finance transactions. He has been deemed an audit committee financial expert, as that term is defined in federal securities regulations, by his fellow directors and has served as the Chair of the Fund’s Audit Committee.

2) Mary Chris Jammet

Ms. Jammet is a seasoned investment management professional and experienced corporate board member who brings more than 30 years of experience to the Fund. Currently a Principal with Bristol Partners LLC, Ms. Jammet served as Senior Vice President and Portfolio Manager at global asset management firm Legg Mason, Inc. (now Franklin Templeton), where she was responsible for \$20 billion in client assets before retiring in 2013. Ms. Jammet is a member of the Board of Directors of Western Alliance Bancorporation (NYSE: WAL). She currently serves as an Advisor to Loyola University Maryland’s Finance Department and is a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors, as well as the Women Corporate Directors Foundation. Ms. Jammet holds a CERT Certificate in Cybersecurity Oversight, awarded by the Software Engineering Institute, Carnegie Mellon University. She has been deemed an audit committee financial expert, as that term is defined in federal securities regulations, by her fellow directors and currently serves as Chair of the Audit Committee.

3) Lauriann C. Kloppenburg

Ms. Kloppenburg brings a wealth of knowledge of securities investing and the investment management industry to the Board, having served in many key roles at Loomis Sayles & Company, an investment management firm with more than \$300 billion under management. During her more than 30-year career with Loomis Sayles, Ms. Kloppenburg was, at various times, the Director of Equity Research, Director of Large-Cap Equities, Chief Investment Officer - Equity Group, and Chief Strategy Officer, in addition to serving as a member of the firm’s board of directors. Ms. Kloppenburg is a member of the Boards of Trustees of Transamerica Funds, Transamerica Series Trust, and Transamerica Asset Allocation Variable Funds. She also serves as an adviser to a private family office. Ms. Kloppenburg has been deemed an audit committee financial expert, as that term is defined in federal securities regulations, by her fellow directors.

4) Steven G. Chambers, Ed.L.D.

Dr. Chambers is a seasoned leader and innovator in the educational technology space, leading a range of companies from start-ups to large tech company operations for more than 25 years. He brings broad experience in corporate leadership and governance to the Board, as well as deep understanding of AI and AI-supported developing technologies. As CEO of Jibo, Inc., Dr. Chambers developed the first social robot for the home, named Time Magazine’s Innovation of the Year for 2017. He is an experienced Board member and advisor, currently serving on the Boards of CallMiner, a conversation analytics company, Snorble, developer of a smart sleep assistant for children, and as a Board advisor for several AI and language-driven technology companies.

5) Frederic A. Escherich

Mr. Escherich brings to the Board extensive knowledge of securities investing and stock valuation acquired during his 25-year tenure at J.P. Morgan & Co. Inc. During his tenure at J.P. Morgan, Mr.

Escherich was head of the Financial Advisory Department, responsible for the industry analysis on all of Morgan's M&A assignments and complex credit transactions. Subsequently, as head of Mergers and Acquisition Research, he was responsible for evaluating numerous issues related to maximizing shareholder value, as well as valuation policies and procedures. Since retiring in 2002, Mr. Escherich has focused full-time on private investing and is well versed in the dynamics of today's equity markets. He has been deemed an audit committee financial expert, as that term is defined in federal securities regulations, by his fellow directors and has served as the Chair of the Fund's Audit Committee.

6) Jane Musser Nelson

Ms. Musser Nelson is a seasoned investment management professional specializing in traditional and alternative financial assets, as well as an experienced corporate board member who brings more than 30 years of investment management expertise to the Fund. Ms. Musser Nelson serves on the Board of Trustees of Blue Owl Alternative Credit Fund. Currently an adviser to investment firms, foundations, and trusts, she also serves, voluntarily, as a Trustee and a member of the investment committee for the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Ms. Musser Nelson formerly was the Managing Director of Investments for Cambridge Associates, a global asset manager for endowments, private wealth and pension plans. Prior to that, she served in senior management roles at Bain Capital, ING Capital Advisors, and Eaton Vance. Ms. Musser Nelson is a former member of the Board of Directors of First Eagle Alternative Capital BDC, Inc. and a former director of Alcentra, an asset management subsidiary of BNY Mellon. Ms. Musser Nelson has been deemed an audit committee financial expert, as that term is defined in federal securities regulations, by her fellow directors.

Interested Director

7) James P. Haynie

Mr. Haynie is CEO of the Fund and PEO since April 20, 2023, and had served as Executive Vice President of the Fund prior to that since January 21, 2015. Before that, he served as President of the Fund beginning on August 19, 2013. He also served as President of PEO from January 21, 2015 to April 17, 2025, and as Executive Vice President of PEO from August 19, 2013 to January 21, 2015. Prior to joining the Fund, he was Chief Investment Officer, U.S. Equities at BNP Paribas Investment Partners from February to August 2013 and was Senior Portfolio Manager at BNP Paribas Investment Partners from 2005 to 2013.

Stock Ownership

<u>Independent Directors</u>	<u>Dollar Value of Shares Owned⁽¹⁾</u>
Kenneth J. Dale	greater than \$100,000
Frederic A. Escherich.	greater than \$100,000
Mary Chris Jammet	greater than \$100,000
Lauriann C. Kloppenburg	greater than \$100,000
Jane Musser Nelson	greater than \$100,000
Steven G. Chambers	\$50,000 - \$100,000
<u>Interested Director</u>	
James P. Haynie.	greater than \$100,000

(1) As of February 12, 2026.

The Board has adopted equity ownership requirements for the directors and senior staff. Under these equity ownership requirements, the Chief Executive Officer, portfolio managers, research analysts, and other executive officers must own a certain value of equity in the Fund Complex with a cost basis equal to a multiple of salary. Non-employee directors must own at least \$100,000 by cost basis of the Fund's Common Stock within 5 years of joining the Board.

The nominees for election as directors of the Fund identified above are also the nominees for election to the Board of Directors of PEO, the Fund's non-controlled affiliate that is part of the Fund Complex, of which the Fund owned 2,572,684 shares, representing 9.4% of the outstanding Common Stock, on December 31, 2025.

Board Leadership Structure

Six of the Fund's seven directors are not "interested persons," as defined by the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the "Act"), and are independent directors. Mr. Haynie is considered an "interested person" under the Act and is not an independent director. The Board has elected Mr. Kenneth J. Dale, an Independent Director, to serve as the Chair of the Board.

Board's Oversight of Risk Management for the Fund

The Board's role in risk management of the Fund is that of oversight. The internal staff of portfolio managers, research analysts, and administrative personnel is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund, including risk management in such aspects as investment performance and investment risk, valuation risk, issuer and counterparty credit risk, compliance risk, and operational risk. As part of its oversight, the Board has delegated to the Audit Committee the primary role of overseeing the assessment and management of risks, including major financial risks, by the Fund's management and the steps that management has taken to monitor and control such risks. The Audit Committee reports to the Board at least quarterly on its discussions of these items with management. In addition, the Board, acting at its regularly scheduled meetings, receives reports from senior management, including the Fund's portfolio management team, the Chief Compliance Officer, and the Chief Financial Officer. Between Board meetings, the Executive Committee, and/or the Chair of the Board, and/or the Chairman of the Audit Committee, as appropriate, interact with the CEO and other senior executives on any matter requiring action by or notice to the Board. The Board also receives periodic presentations from senior management regarding specific operational, compliance, or investment areas, such as business continuity, personal trading, valuation, investment research, and securities lending, and receives reports from the Fund's General Counsel regarding regulatory, compliance, and governance matters. The Fund believes that its leadership structure enhances risk oversight. It should be noted that, in its oversight role, the Board is not a guarantor of the Fund's investments or activities.

Process for Stockholders to Communicate with Board

The Board of Directors has implemented a process for stockholders of the Fund to send communications to the Board. Any stockholder desiring to communicate with the Board, or with specific individual directors, may do so by writing to the Secretary of the Fund at Adams Diversified Equity Fund, Inc., 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202, or by sending an email message to the Secretary via adamsfunds.com/contact. The Secretary has been instructed by the Board to promptly forward all such communications to the addressees indicated thereon.

Policy on Board of Directors’ Attendance at Annual Meetings

The Fund’s policy with regard to attendance by the Board of Directors at Annual Meetings is that all directors are expected to attend Annual Meetings that occur on the same day as a Board meeting, absent unusual or extenuating circumstances that prohibit attendance. All directors submitted for election attended the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Information as to Other Executive Officers

Set forth below are the names, ages, and positions with the Fund, as of December 31, 2025, of all executive officers of the Fund other than the CEO, who also serves as a director. Executive officers serve as such until the election of their successors.

Mr. D. Cotton Swindell, 62, is President of the Fund since April 20, 2023 and had served as Executive Vice President since January 21, 2015. Prior to that, he served as Vice President - Research beginning on March 30, 2004, and as a research analyst beginning in 2002. Prior to joining the Fund, Mr. Swindell was an Equity Analyst with Wachovia Securities and for 10 years, an Equity Analyst with Alex. Brown & Sons. Earlier in his career, he worked at Prudential-Bache Securities in investment banking and fixed-income trading.

Mr. Brian S. Hook, 56, has served as Vice President of the Fund and PEO since March 19, 2013, as Chief Financial Officer of the Fund and PEO since March 20, 2012, as Treasurer of the Fund and PEO from June 1, 2009 to April 20, 2023, and as Assistant Treasurer of the Fund and PEO from September 2008 to June 1, 2009. Prior to joining the Fund, he was a Vice President and Senior Manager at T. Rowe Price and a business assurance manager with Coopers & Lybrand L.L.P. prior thereto.

Ms. Janis F. Kerns, 62, has served as Vice President of the Fund and PEO since April 15, 2021, as the General Counsel, Secretary, and Chief Compliance Officer since July 3, 2018, and as Assistant General Counsel from January 22, 2018 to July 3, 2018. Prior to joining the Fund in January 2018, she was Of Counsel in a prominent Washington, D.C. law firm. Previously, Ms. Kerns served for three years on the staff of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in the Division of Investment Management’s Office of Investment Company Regulation. She also worked for two years as internal legal counsel for Paine Webber Group (now UBS Wealth Management USA). Ms. Kerns has more than 30 years of legal and compliance experience in the investment management industry.

The address for each executive officer is the Fund’s headquarters office, 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202.

Security Ownership of Management of the Fund ^(a)		Shares of Common Stock Beneficially Owned ^{(b)(c)}
Name		
D. Cotton Swindell		81,304
Brian S. Hook		45,783
Janis F. Kerns		51,558

(a) As of December 31, 2025. Share ownership of directors and executive officers as a group is shown in the table beginning on page 6 and footnotes thereto.

(b) To the Fund’s knowledge, each officer had sole investment and sole voting power with respect to the shares shown opposite his or her name.

(c) Calculated on the basis of 122,535,119 shares of Common Stock outstanding on December 31, 2025, each of the executive officers listed herein owned less than 1.0% of the Common Stock outstanding.

Board Meetings and Committees of the Board

The Board held seven regular meetings in 2025. Director attendance at all meetings in 2025 was 100%. Further information about the Board and its committees is provided below.

Audit Committee

Ms. Jammet (Chair), Mr. Escherich, Ms. Kloppenburg, and Ms. Musser Nelson, each of whom is an independent director as such is defined by the rules of the New York Stock Exchange, and none of whom is an “interested person” as such is defined by the Act, constitute the membership of the Board’s Audit Committee, which met four times in 2025. The Board has determined each of Ms. Jammet, Mr. Escherich, Ms. Kloppenburg, and Ms. Musser Nelson to be an audit committee financial expert, as that term is defined in federal securities regulations. The Board has adopted a written charter under which the Committee operates. A copy of the Audit Committee Charter (“Charter”) is available on the Fund’s website: adamsfunds.com. Set forth below is the report of the Committee:

Audit Committee Report

The purposes of the Audit Committee are set forth in the Committee’s written Charter. As provided in the Charter, the role of the Committee is to assist the Board of Directors in its oversight on matters relating to accounting, financial reporting, internal control, auditing, risk assessment and risk management, regulatory compliance activities, and other matters the Board deems appropriate. The Committee also selects the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm in accordance with the provisions set out in the Charter. Management, however, is responsible for the preparation, presentation, and integrity of the Fund’s financial statements, and for the procedures designed to assure compliance with accounting standards and applicable laws and regulations. The independent registered public accounting firm is responsible for planning and carrying out proper audits.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Committee has reviewed and discussed the audited financial statements contained in the 2025 Annual Report of the Fund with the Fund’s management and with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (“PwC”), the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm. In addition, the Committee has discussed with PwC the matters required to be discussed pursuant to applicable requirements of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (“PCAOB”) and the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Committee has also received from PwC the written disclosures and the letter required by applicable requirements of the PCAOB regarding PwC’s communications with the Committee concerning independence, considered whether the provision of nonaudit services by PwC is compatible with maintaining PwC’s independence, and discussed with PwC its independence.

In reliance on the reviews and discussions with management and PwC referred to above, and subject to the limitations on the responsibilities and role of the Committee set forth in the Charter and discussed above, the Committee recommended to the Board of Directors, and the Board has approved, that the audited financial statements be included in the Fund’s 2025 Annual Report for filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Respectfully submitted on February 12, 2026, by the members of the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors:

Mary Chris Jammet, Chair
Frederic A. Escherich
Lauriann C. Kloppenburg
Jane Musser Nelson

Compensation Committee

Ms. Musser Nelson (Chair), Ms. Kloppenburg, Mr. Escherich, and Ms. Jammet constituted the membership of the Board's Compensation Committee, which met three times in 2025. The Committee reviews and approves the compensation of the directors, officers, and employees, including salaries and the cash incentive compensation plans in which the executive officers, officers, and employees of the Fund are eligible to participate. The Board has adopted a written charter under which the Compensation Committee operates, a copy of which is available on the Fund's website: adamsfunds.com.

Executive Committee

Mr. Dale (Chair), Ms. Jammet, Ms. Kloppenburg, Ms. Musser Nelson, and Mr. Haynie constitute the membership of the Board's Executive Committee, which met one time in 2025. The Committee has the authority of the Board of Directors between meetings of the Board except as limited by law, the Fund's Bylaws, or Board resolution.

Nominating and Governance Committee

Ms. Kloppenburg (Chair), Mr. Escherich, Ms. Jammet, and Ms. Musser Nelson constituted the membership of the Board's Nominating and Governance Committee, which met five times in 2025. The Board has adopted a written charter under which the Nominating and Governance Committee operates, a copy of which is available on the Fund's website: adamsfunds.com.

Among other responsibilities, the Committee supervises and reviews Board composition, director nominations, and corporate governance matters. For new director nominations, the Committee leads the search for qualified director candidates, including canvassing, recruiting, evaluating, and recommending nominees to the full Board.

Stockholders may recommend candidates for consideration by the Committee by writing to the Secretary of the Fund at the office of the Fund, 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202, giving the candidate's name, biographical data, and qualifications, and stating whether the candidate would be an "interested person" of the Fund. A written statement from the candidate, consenting to be named as a candidate, and if nominated and elected, to serve as a director, should accompany any such recommendation.

The Board appreciates the value of diversity in its membership. In practice, when evaluating director candidates, the Committee and the full Board considers the diversity of skills, experience, and/or perspective a prospective nominee would bring to the Board, both individually and in the context of the Board's existing membership at the time such potential candidate is considered.

Transactions with Adams Natural Resources Fund, Inc.

The Fund shares certain expenses for research, accounting services, other office services (including proportionate salaries and other employee benefits), rent and related expenses, and miscellaneous expenses, such as office supplies, postage, subscriptions, and travel, with PEO. These expenses were paid by the Fund and, on the date the payment was made, PEO simultaneously paid to the Fund its allocated share of such expenses, based on either the proportion of the size of the investment portfolios of the two funds, relative net assets of the two funds excluding affiliated holdings, or, where possible, on an actual usage basis, in accordance with the Fund's expense allocation policy. In 2025, the Funds incurred \$17,645,194 in shared expenses, and PEO's share of such expenses was \$4,017,574.

Compensation of Directors and Executive Officers

Each director who is not an interested person receives a retainer fee of \$65,000 for the fiscal year corresponding to their term of service. In addition, the Board Chair and Chair of each committee receive \$20,000 and \$3,000, respectively, for the fiscal year corresponding to their service in each capacity. The total amount of fees paid to independent directors during the calendar year ended December 31, 2025 was \$370,250.

The following table sets forth for each of the persons named below the aggregate compensation received from the Fund during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, for services in all capacities:

Name	Position	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund ⁽¹⁾	Total Compensation from Fund and Fund Complex paid to Directors ⁽²⁾
James P. Haynie	Chief Executive Officer ^(a)	\$1,587,713	N/A
D. Cotton Swindell	President	1,014,580	N/A
Brian S. Hook	Vice President & Chief Financial Officer	484,053	N/A
Independent Directors			
Kenneth J. Dale	Chair of the Board ^(a)	85,000	\$170,000
Frederic A. Escherich	Director ^{(b)(c)(d)}	66,500	133,000
Mary Chris Jammet	Director ^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}	68,000	136,000
Lauriann C. Kloppenburg	Director ^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}	68,000	136,000
Jane Musser Nelson	Director ^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}	66,500	133,000

(1) Each officer received matching and discretionary deferred compensation under the Fund's Employee Thrift Plan and Executive Nonqualified Supplemental Thrift Plan (see "Employee Thrift Plans" below). The non-employee directors do not participate in these plans. Of the amount shown, aggregate deferred compensation from the Fund for Messrs. Haynie, Swindell, and Hook was \$146,130, \$88,830, and \$44,937, respectively.

(2) Includes total compensation paid to directors for service on the boards of investment companies in the Fund Complex, which is composed of two closed-end investment companies, including the Fund. Mr. Haynie receives no compensation for his services as a director of the Fund and PEO.

(a) Member of Executive Committee

(b) Member of Audit Committee

(c) Member of Compensation Committee

(d) Member of Nominating and Governance Committee

2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan

In 2005, the Board of Directors adopted and shareholders approved the Fund's 2005 Equity Incentive Compensation Plan ("2005 Plan"). Stockholders reapproved the 2005 Plan in 2010, and it expired by its terms on April 27, 2015. The 2005 Plan was administered by the Compensation Committee, and awarded grants of restricted and deferred stock units and dividend equivalents on those units. All grants under the 2005 Plan vested prior to 2019. Certain restricted and deferred stock units awarded under the 2005 Plan, for which payment has been deferred by election of the recipient, remain outstanding. All deferred and outstanding awards represent rights to receive Fund stock.

Employee Thrift Plans

Employees of the Fund who have completed six months of service may defer up to 100% of base salary and cash incentive compensation to a tax-qualified thrift plan ("Thrift Plan") instead of being paid currently, and the Fund contributes an amount equal to 100% of each employee's contribution (up to 6% of base salary and cash incentive compensation) but not in excess of the maximum permitted by law (see footnote (1) to the Compensation Table set forth above regarding 2025 contributions for the officers identified therein). The Fund also has the discretion to contribute annually to each employee's thrift plan account an amount of up to 6% of the employee's base salary and cash incentive compensation attributable to the prior year's service with the Fund. All employee contributions are credited to the employee's individual account. Employees may elect that their salary deferral and other contributions be invested in the common stock of the Fund or PEO, or a number of mutual funds, or a combination thereof. All of the Fund's matching contribution is invested in accordance with the employee's investment elections. An employee's interest in amounts derived from the Fund's contributions becomes non-forfeitable upon completion of 36 months of service or upon death or retirement. Payments of amounts not withdrawn or forfeited under the Thrift Plan may be made upon retirement or other termination of employment.

The Fund also maintains an Executive Nonqualified Supplemental Thrift Plan for eligible employees of the Fund (the "Nonqualified Plan"). The purpose of the Nonqualified Plan is to provide deferred compensation in excess of contribution limits imposed by the Internal Revenue Code on tax-qualified thrift plans, including the Thrift Plan described above. In accordance with such limitations, for 2025, the maximum annual amount that an individual can defer to the Thrift Plan is \$23,500 for those under the age of 50, and \$31,000 for those age 50 and over (except for years when an individual turns age 60, 61, 62, or 63, the limit is increased to \$34,750). The maximum combined amount – consisting of both the employee's contributions and the Fund's matching contributions – that can go into the Thrift Plan is \$70,000 per year for those under the age of 50 and \$77,500 per year for those age 50 and over (except for years when an individual turns age 60, 61, 62, or 63, the limit is increased to \$81,250).

The Nonqualified Plan permits an eligible employee to contribute to the Nonqualified Plan up to the maximum amount of 6% of the employee's base salary and cash incentive compensation that he or she is prevented from contributing to the Thrift Plan because of the Internal Revenue Code's limitations on annual contributions, and for the Fund to contribute the 100% matching contribution on that sum and/or the Fund's discretionary contribution that would otherwise be limited by the Internal Revenue Code's limitations on annual contributions. The employee's contributions and the Fund's contributions to the Nonqualified Plan are invested in eligible mutual funds in accordance with the employee's investment elections.

Brokerage Commissions

During the past fiscal year, the Fund paid brokerage commissions in the amount of \$709,625 on the purchase and sale of portfolio securities traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the National

Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System, and on swap transactions, substantially all of which were paid to brokers providing research and other investment services to the Fund. The average per-share commission rate paid by the Fund was \$0.03. No commissions were paid to an affiliated broker.

Portfolio Turnover

The portfolio turnover rate (purchases or sales, whichever is lower, as a percentage of average portfolio value) for the past three years has been as follows:

<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
55.6%	61.4%	63.6%

Expense Ratio

The ratio of expenses to the average net assets of the Fund for the past three years has been as follows:

<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
0.49%	0.56%	0.61%

The Board of Directors unanimously recommends that stockholders vote FOR the election of each of the nominees for director.

(2) RATIFICATION OF SELECTION OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM

As permitted under the Act, the Audit Committee selected PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 100 E. Pratt Street, Suite 2600, Baltimore, MD 21202, an independent registered public accounting firm, for recommendation to the full Board as the independent registered public accounting firm to audit the books and accounts of the Fund for the year ending December 31, 2026. PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP was the Fund’s principal auditor during the year ending 2025. A majority of the members of the Board of Directors who are not “interested persons” (as defined by the Act) have approved the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP as the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm for 2026. While not required under the Act, the Audit Committee and the Board of Directors have determined to submit for stockholder ratification the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP as the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm for 2026 at the Annual Meeting. If the stockholders do not ratify the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, the Board of Directors will reconsider whether or not to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, but may nonetheless appoint such firm. Representatives of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP are expected to be present at the meeting to make a statement, if they so desire, and to respond to appropriate questions. The Fund has been informed that PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP does not have any direct financial or any material indirect financial interest in the Fund.

Independent Accountant Fees

Audit Fees

The aggregate fees for professional services rendered by the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, for the audit of the Fund’s annual financial statements for 2025 and 2024 were \$134,518 and \$128,112, respectively.

Audit-Related Fees

The aggregate fees for audit-related services rendered to the Fund by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP for additional cybersecurity audit procedures was \$12,300 in 2025. There were no audit-related fees in 2024.

Tax Fees

The aggregate fees for professional services rendered to the Fund by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP for the review of the Fund's excise tax calculations and preparations of federal, state, and excise tax returns for 2025 and 2024 were \$16,816 and \$16,015, respectively.

All Other Fees

Other fees for services rendered to the Fund by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP for 2025 and 2024 were \$1,696 and \$1,696, respectively. Fees were related to licenses for technical reference tools.

The Board's Audit Committee has considered the provision by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP of the services covered in this **All Other Fees** section and found that they are compatible with maintaining PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP's independence.

Audit Committee Pre-Approval Policy

The Audit Committee's policy is to pre-approve all audit and permissible non-audit services provided by the independent auditors. In assessing requests for services by the independent auditors, the Committee considers whether such services are consistent with the auditor's independence; whether the independent auditors are likely to provide the most effective and efficient service based upon their familiarity with the Fund; and whether the service could enhance the Fund's ability to manage or control risk or improve financial statement audit and review quality. The Committee may delegate pre-approval authority to its Chair. Any pre-approvals by the Chair under this delegation are to be reported to the Committee at its next scheduled meeting. All services performed for 2025 were pre-approved by the Committee.

The Board of Directors unanimously recommends that stockholders vote FOR ratification of the selection of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

(3) OTHER MATTERS AND ANNUAL REPORT

As of the date of this proxy statement, management knows of no other business that will come before the meeting. Should other business be properly brought up, it is intended that proxies in the accompanying form will be voted thereon in accordance with the judgment of the person or persons voting such proxies.

The Annual Report of the Fund for the year ended December 31, 2025, including financial statements, is being mailed to all stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at the Annual Meeting to be held on April 16, 2026. A copy of the Fund's Annual Report will be furnished to other stockholders, without charge, upon request. You may request a copy by contacting the Secretary of the Fund at 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202, by telephoning the Fund at (800) 638-2479, or by sending an email message via adamsfunds.com/contact.

Stockholder Proposals or Nominations for 2027 Annual Meeting

Stockholder proposals for inclusion in the proxy statement and form of proxy relating to the 2027 Annual Meeting must be received at the office of the Fund, 500 E. Pratt Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202, no later than October 22, 2026 (5:00 p.m.).

In addition, for stockholder proposals or director nominations that a stockholder seeks to bring before the 2027 Annual Meeting, but does not seek to have included in the Fund's proxy statement and form of proxy for that meeting, the following requirements apply: Pursuant to the Fund's Bylaws, in order for stockholder proposals or nominations of persons for election to the Board of Directors to be properly brought before the 2027 Annual Meeting, any such stockholder proposal or nomination (including in the case of a nomination, the information required by the Fund's advance notice Bylaws provisions) must be received at the office of the Fund no earlier than September 22, 2026 and no later than October 22, 2026 (5:00 p.m.). The Fund's advance notice Bylaw requirements are separate from, and in addition to, the Commission's requirements (including the timing requirements described in the preceding paragraph) that a stockholder must meet in order to have a stockholder proposal included in the proxy statement.