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Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Monday, January 16. Today in Committee of the Whole we debated House Bill 19, which would require large out-of-state companies to collect Wyoming sales tax on goods purchased online. This bill would apply to companies that conduct more than \$100,000 in business or have more than 200 transactions in a year. Currently, Wyoming-based businesses must collect this tax, and these large online companies do not. This puts Wyoming companies at a disadvantage. Why would we give large online companies a business exemption we don't give our own companies? I supported this bill in Committee of the Whole, even though its constitutionality has been questioned. In Wyoming we have a lot of tax exemptions, and in these difficult budgetary times, exemptions will need to be reviewed.

In the Appropriations Committee today, we worked a bill that would operationalize Amendment A, the constitutional amendment that allows the Wyoming State Treasurer to invest a percentage of specific trust funds, like the Wyoming Natural Resource Trust Fund, into a pooled account. This pooled account can then invest in higher-return instruments, like equities. We also worked a bill that would further refine the spending policies on our permanent mineral and school trust funds. In these hard economic times, we do not want to put income from these accounts into the corpus where it cannot be utilized. Both of these bills were very complicated, and we will continue to work on them another day.

In order to cut General Fund spending in the state of Wyoming, the Appropriations Committee is looking at funding some agencies in other ways, such as using more of their own funds or drawing from other accounts. This is similar to how things were done about ten years ago. We will look at moving both the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Wyoming Livestock Board back onto their own fee budgets. This likely will result in higher brand inspection and hunter fees. We are also examining moving WYDOT and the State Engineer's Office off General Fund appropriations. These options are being mulled over in an attempt to reduce what

amounts to a \$100 million structural deficit in Wyoming General Fund operations. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com