

1-26-2017

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Thursday, Jan. 26. Today in Committee of the Whole we heard a bill that provides authority to spend \$80 million on school facilities, including both construction and major maintenance. This money was appropriated a year ago, and includes projects constituting the State's greatest needs. We will have to solve the lack of a funding source for major maintenance going forward.

There is a bill which will look at placing a tax on services to fund major maintenance, and I like the concept. We have no choice but to find a funding source, with Wyoming's constitutional mandate to fund school capital construction, equitably and adequately. We can put the decision off, or we can address it.

We also heard a bill to provide American Indian education, a bill to create a 5-day out-of-state fishing license, a bill to create a neighboring state tuition break for students headed to college or university, and a bill to help homeless minors become self-dependent.

We will soon hear a bill on a cigarette tax increase. I have voted against this tax in the past. If it were tied to education funding, I might be more supportive.

HB 135, the Government Non-Discrimination Act, was pulled out of committee by its sponsor. At her request, it will not be heard on the floor of the House. The bill had some real constitutional issues, and I think she made the right decision.