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Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Tuesday evening. During a budget session, in order for a bill to be considered by a committee, it must pass Introduction with a two-thirds majority vote. The bill is assigned to a committee, where testimony will be heard from the public and from relevant agencies. The committee will then make suitable amendments before either passing or failing the bill. A bill that passes is subsequently heard by the entire House. This is just the beginning of a bill's progress through the Legislature.

Today, several bills passed the introductory vote, including my bill, HB95, which attempts to plug holes in Wyoming's construction preference laws. HB5, prohibiting the sale of wildlife information, passed the introductory vote today. I had attempted to bring this bill last session, but it failed in the Senate. During the interim the bill was taken up by the Travel, Recreation, and Wildlife Committee. The bill arose after a website began posting photos of individual bucks in the Wyoming Range with high fidelity to certain areas. The site, which has since been taken down, sold the locations of the bucks. This action violates the fair chase principle, in my opinion.

In the next few days, the House will vote for or against Introduction on a bill that would raise the tax on alcohol and tobacco, and a bill that would impose a statewide 2 percent lodging tax to offset costs of the Department of Tourism. Currently, there is no statewide lodging tax. Local boards can ask voters to approve or deny a lodging tax of up to 4 percent, to be utilized for tourism promotion. This bill would essentially require a statewide 2 percent lodging tax, a local 2 percent lodging tax, and allow local tourism boards to give voters the choice of adding another 2 percent for local use. The Legislature has been working to move agencies off general fund dollars, and the 2 percent statewide lodging tax would almost exactly offset the budget for the Wyoming Department of Tourism. I have been told that 70 to 80 percent of Wyoming lodging tax dollars are paid by non-residents. The leadership of the Legislature passed the lodging tax bill out of the Management Council committee this evening, so it will soon hit the floor of House for an introductory vote. This seems to be about the least intrusive tax that could

be implemented, but I look forward to hearing from my constituents. I voted for the tobacco tax last session, but have not made a decision on it for this session. I welcome your comments at albert@albertsommers.com

Thank you