

2-21-2018

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne and the 2018 Budget Session.

Today the House focused on amendments to the budget bill, HB1, as part of its Second Reading. Numerous amendments have been proposed for the budget, and discussion and voting on these amendments will likely continue for most of tomorrow.

Many amendments considered today received extended discussion. Amendments 14 and 46 both dealt with the funding of water projects and the State Engineer's Office. Amendment 14 attempted to remove a provision that funded staff within the State Engineer's Office who are dedicated to water issues. This amendment failed. Amendment 46 attempted to bring funding for the State Engineer's Office from the general fund, rather than from a specific budget account for water. This amendment also failed.

Amendment 16 was also discussed extensively. This amendment called for selling one of the two state airplanes. These aircraft are used for a variety of reasons, including transportation of private citizens who volunteer in state government or are involved in other important ways. Providing efficient transportation for these citizens and allowing them to participate in Wyoming's government is an important use of these aircraft. The amendment failed after discussion.

A few major amendments regarding healthcare and public health came up near the end of the day. Amendment 19 attempted to strike some funding for the State's Palliative Care Council. This council is dedicated to improving end-of-life healthcare for Wyoming citizens, and many other important end-of-life medical issues. The amendment was withdrawn.

Next, Amendment 60 attempted to restore funding in three major areas within the State Department of Health. These programs related to disabled employees, outdoor advertising of infectious disease, and support for families caring for disabled children. The three issues were divided and voted on separately.

My job as a member of the Appropriations Committee is to protect the budget, and basically argue against every amendment. I will sometimes vote against our committee position, but rarely.

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Thank you.