

1/15/2019

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from the 6th day of the 65th General Session of the Wyoming Legislature. The Wyoming House of Representatives is in full swing and has considered several pieces of legislation with wide ranging impacts on the residents of Wyoming.

The House passed, on third reading, [HB0025](#) – Virtual Education Amendments, by a vote of 58-0-2. The House also advanced seven bills on second reading, including some interesting bills like [HB0003](#) - Board of outfitters and guides-civil penalties, [HB0037](#) – Elected Officials Residency Requirements, and [HB0057](#) – Financial Technology Sandbox.

The House Committee of the Whole also heard and passed several bills on voice vote. These bills included:

[HB0005](#) – Medicaid benefit recovery-estates

[HB0006](#) – Physical therapy-scope of practice revisions

[HJ0001](#) – Wyoming support for delisting the grizzly bear

[HB0066](#) – Lodging Tax

Of particular interest to me is HB0066, the Statewide Lodging Tax. This bill would impose a lodging tax of 5 percent with 3 percent being used to fund the Wyoming Department of Tourism and 2 percent to be distributed to local governments. This bill creates a mechanism for removing the Office of Tourism from the General Fund by establishing a dedicated funding stream. This is a continuation of a strategy the Legislature has employed for agencies like the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Wyoming Department of Transportation. Additionally, this bill would shift the funding of the Office of Tourism off the backs of Wyoming citizens, as 80 percent of this tax is paid by out-of-staters. I voted for this bill.

HBs 12 and 28 passed Committee of the Whole, and both dealt with shed antler hunting. My bill, HB12, gives the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission the authority to regulate the date, time-of-day, and location of shed antler seasons. Currently the season opens May 1 at midnight on the west side of the Continental Divide. This bill will give the Commission some flexibility to set reasonable opening hours and adjust for long winters. HB 28 would give the Commission authority to regulate shed antler hunting statewide on public lands. Other areas of the state are facing similar issues to what Sublette County faced several years ago. Both bills passed Committee of the Whole, and I voted for both of them.

I can be reached with questions or concerns at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com).

Thank you