

2-13-2020

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting on the fourth day of the 2020 Budget Session. As of Thursday afternoon, nearly 400 bills had been filed in the House and Senate. This includes 256 bills in the House and 142 in the Senate. 45 bills have already failed to move forward.

The House debated nearly 50 bills today, including these that I supported and that passed an introduction vote:

- [HB 186, K-12 and local government structural deficit repair act](#) was approved for introduction and referred to the House Appropriations Committee. This bill fixes the structural deficit in education and local government funding by shifting some current revenue streams and imposing a one-cent sales tax when Wyoming's Rainy Day account drops below \$500 million. Our long-term revenue and expenditure profile projects that the Rainy Day Fund would still be above \$600 million in 2024, but that is a decline from \$1.8 billion three years ago. Both K12 funding and local government funding is tied to the fate of the Rainy Day Account, and we need to develop a stop gap. I think a sales tax is the most equitable tax we have, because everyone pays some.
- [HB 194, Wyoming Department of Agriculture Fees](#) would increase certain user ag fees and was approved for introduction and referred to the House Appropriations Committee. The Department of Agriculture had a couple of large budget requests, and their fees were not keeping up. Our ranch pays about \$20 to the Department of Ag to certify the accuracy of our livestock scales, when that likely doesn't even pay for the gas to the ranch.
- [HJ0006, Reject National Popular Vote Compact](#) seeks to forbid Wyoming from participating in the National Popular Vote Compact, which undermines the electoral college and upsets the established method of presidential elections.

- [HB0197, Abortion-48 hour waiting period](#). I voted against this bill last session, but I voted for introduction of this bill today. I will listen to the debate and to your thoughts on this bill. I have heard both support and opposition to this bill.
- [HB0123, Pharmacists prescribing contraceptives](#). I worry about pharmacists prescribing.

Bills that I didn't support that did not get introduced included:

- [HB 205, Tobacco taxes](#). This bill would have imposed too high a tax on tobacco.
- [HB108, Ban on sanctuary cities and counties](#). I opposed this bill as there are no sanctuary cities in Wyoming and I don't feel this bill was needed.
- [HB 215, Designated migration corridors-limit](#). This bill would specify a maximum number of designated migration corridors. I support letting the Governor's Executive Order work for a year or two before we codify any migration language.
- [HB0203, Sage grouse game-bird farm certification extension](#). Trying to raise sage grouse in a bird farm has had virtually no success.

Bills that I supported that did not make introduction included:

- [HB 201, Transportation computer system replacement and maintenance](#) failed introduction. I supported this increase in fees, because we need to replace the main computer operating system that WYDOT utilizes today. It will cost over \$60 million dollars to replace the system that houses our drivers licenses and is utilized for elections. Money is in short supply.

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

Thank you.