

2-21-2020

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on the tenth day of the 2020 Budget Session. Budget Sessions are typically 20 days. We have four extra days we can use this year if the House and Senate have not completed business.

As of Friday afternoon, 44 bills had been passed out of the House and await consideration in the Senate. The Senate has passed 39 bills that the House may now consider. All bills must be passed by a Committee in their house of origin by this Monday, February 24, in order to move forward. Thursday, February 27 is "crossover," when any bill that has not been passed out of its chamber of origin will not be further considered.

A few interesting bills include:

- HJ0004 - Legislative sessions. This bill, of which I am a co-sponsor, would amend the Wyoming Constitution by repealing the introductory vote requirement for bills in a legislative budget session. For non-budget related bills to even be introduced during a Budget Session, they must receive a 2/3 majority vote. Voting to introduce every single bill takes a tremendous amount of time during an already short session. The bill was unanimously approved by the House Appropriations Committee today and awaits further consideration by the House.
- HB0249 - Investment of state funds. This bill would authorize the State Loan and Investment Board to purchase land and mineral assets for investment that are located within the state of Wyoming or within states with contiguous borders to Wyoming. This could occur only after fully examining impacts to funds utilized for purchase as well as impacts to the state. The purchase would also need to meet the Wyoming Uniform Prudent Investor Act. The State of Wyoming is contemplating purchasing the checkerboard railroad lands in Southern Wyoming, because they have recently sold to a corporation that in turn wishes to sell them. Should Wyoming buy these lands? How would they be managed? How would they be paid for as revenues decline? What will be the approval process? These are questions I have.

Today we also concluded Third Reading of the Budget in both the House and Senate. Members in their respective chambers had the opportunity to offer additional amendments to the Budget. Fifty-two budget amendments were filed in the House, and 37 in the Senate. One budget amendment of interest was the following:

- H3028.01. This amendment would require a third-party consultant to conduct a study, provide recommendations, and provide a report on the University of Wyoming's governance structure and administrative practices. The firing of UW's previous President was likely the motive for the amendment. I voted against the amendment, because UW's governance structure is in Wyoming's constitution, and should be debated through a constitutional amendment. This clearly is legislating in the budget.

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