



NEWS RELEASE

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Management Council Sets Next Steps for Legislative Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Limited Special Session Discussed for Early-May, Additional Session for June

Everywhere, Wyoming – The Wyoming Legislature’s Management Council, a committee that sets governing policies and procedures as well as interim committee topics for the House and Senate, met remotely yesterday to consider legislative responses to the current public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as study topics for joint interim committees. The Council discussed holding a short, limited session in early May to address immediate needs coupled with a longer session in June to flesh out additional support and response programs.

“The impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on Wyoming families, businesses, hospitals and communities cannot be overstated,” said Senate President Drew Perkins. “Coupled with the dramatic drop in oil prices, action from the legislature must be strategic, adaptive

and quick."

"I'd like to thank Governor Gordon for his leadership during this crisis," said Speaker Steve Harshman. "The Wyoming Legislature and our staff are partnered with the Governor and the Executive branch and everyone is working hard to meet the unprecedented challenges facing our people and communities. None of us could have predicted this event. The key now is how we respond as that will determine the outcome. We are certainly wounded, but we want to emerge and come out of this stronger and with new skills and new opportunities for our precious state."

The Management Council and Governor Mark Gordon discussed a host of issues in need of immediate discussion and action including healthcare delivery and training, small business relief and assistance, allocation of Mineral Royalty Grant (MRG) funding to local communities, providing flexibility to the Wyoming Community Development Authority to curb evictions and extend deadlines for mortgage payments for veterans, assisting credit unions to help in facilitating Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, completing construction of the Wyoming Life Resource Center in Lander and updates to the Wyoming State Hospital. Other topics related to the impact of COVID-19 for discussion included elections, workshare and working with Governor Gordon to comply with federal guidelines in appropriating more than \$1.25 billion in funding coming directly to the state through the CARES Act. During yesterday's meeting, the Management Council assigned many of these topics to committees to begin work on immediately.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Members of the Management Council met via the web with legislators participating from their homes and offices. Governor Gordon, Legislative Service Office (LSO) Director Matt Obrecht and LSO Budget and Fiscal Administrator Don Richards all presented potential legislative responses to the pandemic for consideration.

The Management Council is forward focused on post-COVID-19 recovery and considered other topics during the meeting today including assigning interim topics for study to nearly twenty committees and task forces, consideration of Management Council policies and a review of legislative contracts. Interim committee meetings will incorporate impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic into discussions.

Earlier this week, Governor Mark Gordon directed all state agency directors to identify opportunities to immediately reduce spending through the end of the current budget year, which ends June 30, and into the next two-year budget. The Governor immediately directed agencies to institute position freezes, halt general fund contracts greater than \$100,000 and implement a rigorous review of major maintenance spending. The directive came shortly after LSO released a memo showing that state revenues could decline from \$555 million to nearly \$2.8 billion as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with declines in oil, gas and coal.

Members of the Management Council include Senate President Drew Perkins, House Speaker Steve Harshman, Senate Minority Leader Chris Rothfuss, House Minority Leader Cathy Connolly, Senate Majority Floor Leader Dan Dockstader, House Majority Floor Leader Eric Barlow, Senate Vice President Ogden Driskill, House Speaker Pro Tempore Albert Sommers, Senate Minority Whip Liisa Anselmi-Dalton, Senate Minority Caucus Chairman Mike Gierau, House Minority Caucus Chairman John Freeman, Senator Bill Landen and Representative Mike Greear.

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