

3/11/2021

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on March 11, 2021. Today, three bills passed 3rd Reading in the House, including [HB0122](#), Hunting and fishing access - reliable funding, which would raise the price of a Wyoming Game and Fish Conservation stamp by \$9.00, primarily to help pay for access programs around the state. Fifteen percent of the money can be used to provide for wildlife conservation efforts related to the transportation system, including signage, wildlife corridors, wildlife crossings, fish passages and game fences. This bill seemed to have broad support from the hunter and conservation organizations. I supported the bill with some concern on the level of the increase, however the bill has a long way to go.

The House debated 12 bills on Committee of the Whole. It passed a substitute version of [HB0173](#), School finance funding, that incorporated a standing committee amendment. This bill proposes a solution to the \$300M annual shortfall in K12 education funding. It diverts one third of a statutory flow of severance tax away from the Permanent Mineral Trust Fund (PWMTF) to the School Foundation Program (SFP). It diverts investment income off the PWMTF that would normally grow the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (LSRA) and sends it to the SFP instead. The bill also incorporates modest reductions to the K12 funding model, and as an insurance policy it institutes a one-cent sales tax when the LSRA drops below \$650 million. Under current projections, the LSRA would not drop below \$650 million until 2025. I supported this bill.

We must solve our education shortfall through a constitutionally crafted solution, recognizing that every child in Wyoming has the right to an equal and adequate education. [HB0174](#), Local government sales and use taxes, would memorialize the local government 5th penny, only if the sales tax in HB173 were to be implemented. This safeguards local government sales tax options.

[HB0163](#), Federal congressional elections - residency, would ensure that Wyoming candidates seeking election to the office of United States senator or representative in Congress cannot also claim residency in another state.

[HB0109](#), Local health officers - education requirements, would allow advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants the ability to hold the title of county health officer. Some small counties have a hard time recruiting a doctor for this position. I supported all of these bills in Committee of the Whole.

All 2021 bills can be viewed here: <https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2021>

I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com with questions or comments.

Thank you.