

1/10/22

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from interim work of the 66th Legislature. The Joint Corporations Committee met on December 28 in Cheyenne. I do not serve on this committee, but I attended the meeting to protect Sublette County's interests in redistricting. On January 6, I attended the Management Council meeting in Cheyenne.

Every 10 years, each state uses the federal census to apportion members of its state legislature. Changes to apportionment after a census is called redistricting, and the Wyoming Legislature is in the process of realigning legislative districts based upon population changes in the 2020 census. Redistricting is entirely a political process that is complicated and confusing. It is a push-pull process that pits one region of the state against another. Redistricting takes time to find the compromises between regions that will meet the Legislature's constitutional requirements while preserving communities of interest.

On December 28, the Joint Corporations Committee met in Cheyenne to continue to debate a statewide redistricting plan. I do not believe there is enough Senate support to pass the committee's current draft plan. It removes a house seat from Carbon County and adds it to the Cheyenne area, causing significant disruption in current House and Senate seats. At this meeting, I presented another plan, which was designed to preserve the status quo to the extent possible and create the least disruption. My plan can be viewed here:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1aGE_Dff462lQhspg0W6S9DXeMlqsHcSZ&ll=42.47330059879308%2C-107.19981551468214&z=7

This plan died in committee on a 6-8 vote.

The Corporations Committee ended the day with the following plan:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1QItJlfqmNtSUHinmUYDH4_AKo53wgT6Q&ll=42.62922775502006%2C-107.29830122096192&z=7

This plan is good for Sublette County, but does not have enough Senate support in the committee to pass.

The Committee will meet again in Casper on January 12 to debate amendments to its draft plan. I have created another option that proposes 61 House districts, instead of the usual 60. This plan would give Laramie County the 11 House seats it desires, and would give our western Regions 9 and 10 the 14 House seats they prefer. The plan also makes the Bighorn Basin region more constitutional, as its current plan is somewhat short in population based upon prior Supreme Court rulings. This 61-House-District plan would require a “non-nested” Senate plan. Wyoming has typically placed two House Districts within a single Senate District, and this is called nesting. The 61-House-District plan can be viewed here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1hWvbFcLF0E6yb4HJXfwpz7-I2VB7Z6DJ&ll=43.22334863669065%2C-108.16949470868694&z=8>

Another plan currently being considered is the I-80 Compromise. It includes 60 House Districts, and moves one District boundary westward to capture more of Laramie County’s population. This would help alleviate the loss of population along the I-80 corridor in south-central Wyoming. I like this plan, because it tries to balance the population declines in Carbon, Sweetwater, Uinta, and Sublette counties by utilizing the growth not only in Lincoln and Teton counties, but also in Laramie County. The challenge with this plan is that Albany County is stuck in the middle. The plan is good for Sublette County, because Sublette would remain whole and my House District 20 would incorporate La Barge. La Barge resides in the Sublette #9 school district, so it would be a natural addition. The plan creates more disruption for other House members than I would like to see, but it is a good compromise with some Senate support. The I-80 Compromise plan is not final, but can viewed here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1foawluxeGwgPhgPp6I3NagRtMyg-OHxS&ll=43.535312547419416%2C-108.70322549285812&z=7>.

Management Council met in Cheyenne on January 6. Management Council comprises the majority and minority leadership of the Wyoming Legislature. I am a member of Management Council, because I am the Majority Floor Leader of the Wyoming House. Management Council serves as the administrative arm of the legislative branch of state government and is its policymaking body when the Legislature is not in session. Management Council appoints the director of the Legislative Service Office and approves staff hired by the director. Management

Council also establishes the calendar for the legislative session, within parameters in the Wyoming Constitution.

Management Council adopted the calendar for a 20-day 2022 Budget Session, which will commence on February 14. This calendar lists the various deadlines for bills in order to maintain a 20-day session, while also providing time to override any Governor vetoes of the budget bill. The session schedule can be viewed at <https://wyoleg.gov/2022/Schedule.pdf>.

Management Council approved a budget for the operations of the Legislature, which will be presented to the full Legislature in February. This budget will appropriate additional dollars for the Legislative Service Office (LSO), which is our legislative staff. The Council heard a report on recruitment and retention of staff. The Legislature lost staff last year at nearly twice the normal rate. The total legislative budget will grow by \$169,000 compared to the 2020 budget.

Management Council also heard a report from LSO on an effort to create a better document management system, one that is more user friendly. As older staff retires or quits and we lose institutional knowledge. We need a system that can search for documents efficiently and accurately. Management Council will also begin to review and update several handbooks and manuals that the Legislature uses.

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