

2/28/22

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on February 28. Today, we heard bills on 2nd Reading, and voted on bills in 3rd Reading consent list. We also debated bills on Committee of the Whole.

[HB0072](#) - hunting license application funds, passed 2nd Reading today. This is one of my bills. It gives hunters who are unsuccessful in drawing a license the opportunity to donate their license fees to the Wyoming wildlife and natural resource trust account or a hunter access account created last session. The hunter can choose to donate the entire portion of their fee or certain whole dollar amounts or may choose to not donate any of their fee. There is an increasing need in Wyoming for wildlife conservation, wildlife crossing projects, and hunter access.

Another bill debated in 2nd Reading today was [HB0131](#) - Nuclear power generation and storage - amendments. This bill updates Wyoming statutes regarding nuclear power plants, in anticipation of TerraPower building its first natrium nuclear plant in Kemmerer. The bill was heavily debated in 2nd Reading, with multiple amendments brought, all of which failed. There are two different factions fighting this bill. One faction does not support storing nuclear waste in Wyoming, and the other faction does not like that Bill Gates helped fund TerraPower. Drawing large nuclear projects like this to Wyoming will contribute to building and strengthening our economy through creating more jobs and businesses. I support this project, because I believe these plants can be operated safely, and we have to look to the future.

Another one of my bills passed 3rd Reading today: [HB0015](#) - Political subdivision club liquor licenses. If you recall from previous press releases, this bill will allow Sublette County to contract out operations of the bar/grill enterprise on the golf course, without having to transfer Sublette County's liquor license to the contracted operator.

Today was crossover day, as we began to debate Senate Files in Committee of the Whole, and House bills are headed to the Senate. As for bills on Committee of the Whole today, there are two worth discussing. [SF0039](#) - Fireman's pension plan benefits, passed with my support. This bill is designed to fix the Fireman A pension fund, because it will go bankrupt in 2027. There are more than 200 retired firefighters in the Fireman A pension fund, and they mostly come from

the larger cities in Wyoming. The pension fund is in jeopardy because it has provided a 3 percent cost-of-living (COLA) increase every year, and it has no new members providing capital. SF0039 is a compromise between firefighters, the State of Wyoming, and the cities that employed these firefighters. I supported the bill because even though it results in the retirees losing their annual COLA, the State will infuse \$55 million into the fund, and the cities will provide \$20 million over the course of several years. This will help make the pension fund solvent. We made a contract with these firefighters and we must uphold our end of the bargain.

[SF0002](#) - Legislative budget, was also discussed and passed Committee of the Whole today. This is the budget bill that funds the Legislature. It is only about \$170,000 greater than the last biennium. We must increase our budget for legislative staff, because we must pay our employees more in order to retain them. The total budget for operations of the Legislature is about \$22 million.

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