

3/2/22

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on March 2. Today, we heard bills on 2nd Reading, had the final vote on bills in 3rd Reading, and voted on bills in Committee of the Whole.

[SF0066](#) - American rescue plan act recovery funds appropriations, was discussed again today on 2nd reading, with many amendments. If you recall from yesterday's press release, this bill appropriates money from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) to cover COVID-related expenses. One amendment I brought forward that would have positively affected Sublette County was [SF0066H2001](#). This amendment appropriated \$15 million in ARPA funds toward improving broadband, which would have helped connectivity in Sublette County. We saw the increased need for reliable high-speed internet during the pandemic. Improvement of broadband infrastructure would mean more employment, economic growth, better education access, and healthcare access. Access to reliable internet is one of the important utilities of this century. Unfortunately, this amendment did not pass, but some money for broadband remains in the bill.

Another amendment to SF66 was [SF0066H2009](#), which also has the potential to positively effect Sublette County. This amendment appropriates additional money for health care infrastructure projects. There is a tremendous need for improved health care infrastructure, clearly demonstrated during the pandemic. As our community continues the effort to build a new hospital, this money could be a key piece of the puzzle. These funds would require a 1 to 1 match, and would allow for a maximum of \$10 million per project. This amendment was adopted.

[SF0067](#) - state-funded capital construction, was also discussed today on 2nd reading through amendments. To recap, this bill sets forth appropriations for capital construction project needs of the state. Although none of the amendments passed, one interesting amendment proposed was [SF0067H2001](#). This amendment would have removed \$54 million that was appropriated to the University of Wyoming for three projects, including improvement of the law school, improvement of the west side stands at War Memorial Stadium, and improvement of Corbett

Pool. These projects need to be addressed because the current infrastructure is either failing or is inadequate. The amendment failed, and I voted against it. We must take care of our aging infrastructure.

[SF0058](#) - Wyoming council for women's issues - workforce services, passed the Committee of the Whole today. This bill will transfer the Wyoming Council for Women's Issues from the Wyoming Business Council to the Department of Workforce Services. This is where it was originally housed, and I believe that the Department of Workforce Services is better equipped to manage this council.

[SF0059](#) - Game and fish fund – investments, passed the committee of the whole. This bill holds that the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission may designate money in its bank account to be transferred into the “pool A” investment account. The rationale is that rather than leaving it in the Game and Fish bank account to accumulate minimal interest, the money can earn a greater rate of return and revenue for the department through conservative investments.

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