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Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting from interim work of the 66th Legislature after the 2022 Budget Session. I will give you a quick recap of what interim work is, why it is so essential to the work of the Legislature, and a sample of what the Legislature will be studying this interim.

When I say the 66th Legislature, that means the State of Wyoming is currently in the sixty-sixth two-year legislative period in its history, which began in 1890. Wyoming has legislative elections every two years, when all of the House of Representatives and half the Senate are voted on by the people. This election cycle is what creates the two-year legislative period.

The Wyoming Constitution allows the Legislature to be in session for 60 days over the two years of each legislative period. During those 60 session days, the Legislature can debate bills, appropriate money, and change laws. Basically, the Legislature can take any action during a session that the Constitution and the law allows for. Each legislative cycle has a General Session and Budget Session, AND any Special Sessions that the Governor or the Legislature determines is necessary.

During the interim (usually 10-11 months) between these sessions, the Legislature meets in various standing committees, select committees, taskforces, and workgroups to study important issues affecting the State of Wyoming and to develop appropriate legislation that seeks solutions to these issues. These various committees comprise House and Senate members working side by side, as opposed to the session, when the House and the Senate occupy distinct chambers at opposite ends of the Capitol, where they debate issues independently of each other, unless compromises must be hashed out in small conference committees.

How does the Legislature decide what topics should be studied by the various legislative committees? The Governor can create his own taskforces and workgroups, which often include agency staff, legislators and citizens with distinct knowledge sets. The Legislature can pass a bill that creates a specific taskforce to study an issue or requires a standing committee to study a specific issue. However, most often the Legislature will determine which topics to study by

convening joint standing committees and joint select committees during the end of the session. These meetings also allow the public opportunities to comment on which topics the Legislature will study in the interim.

Ultimately, the leadership of the Legislature, through the Management Council, makes the final decision on which topics and how many topics will be studied each interim. The Management Council is authorized to make decisions on how the Legislature spends money from its budget. Committee meetings cost money to conduct, and so Management Council decides which topics and how many meetings each committee will be allowed. Typically, Management Council approves most of the topics that a committee wants to study, but it tries to eliminate duplication of topics unless two committees are working together on an issue. The bills that come out of interim work are a result of expert testimony, research conducted by legislative staff, and public input. Committee bills have a much higher success rate in the Legislature than personal bills, and that is why what is chosen for study is so important.

Management Council met in Cheyenne on April 8 to decide which topics the legislative committees will study this interim. As Majority Floor Leader of the Wyoming House of Representatives, I serve on Management Council and I participated in setting the legislative topics of study for the upcoming year. By the end of the week, all the interim topics will be posted on the legislative website:

<https://www.wyoleg.gov/> Below are just a few of the topics that committees will be studying this interim.

- The Judiciary Committee will study trespass laws, including trespass by drone.
- The Revenue Committee will review issues related to property taxes including consideration of property tax relief programs and property taxes on second homes.
- The Education Committee will explore recruitment and retention of school district personnel.
- The Agriculture Committee will review Wyoming fencing laws and to better define what constitutes a legal fence and where different types of fencing are authorized.

- The Travel, Recreation, and Wildlife Committee will receive updates on the work of the Wyoming Wildlife Taskforce and consider any legislative recommendations the taskforce may have, including replacing preference points with a bonus point system.
- The Corporations Committee will study issues related to the lack of workforce housing in Wyoming, including the sources of the problem and the social and economic impacts created by it.
- The Minerals, Business and Economic Development Committee will study energy issues that are currently affecting the state, including oil-and-gas issues, nuclear energy, carbon sequestration, hydrogen energy development, and federal bonding regulations.

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