

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you on February 10, the 23rd day of the General Session of the 67th Legislature. Today we worked Senate File bills on 3rd reading and Committee of the Whole.

[SF0068 - Prescriptive easement for water conveyances](#). This bill relates primarily to irrigation ditches where the water right owner does not own the surface property. We heard testimony that as land ownership changes or the land becomes subdivided, traditional access to irrigation ditches is restricted and/or challenged more consistently in court. Case law has established that a water right owner with a recorded water easement would be allowed to access the irrigation ditch or structure for necessary maintenance or repair to ensure the use of their water right. This bill would codify the case law findings in state statutes to give more guidance for land and water property owners. This bill passed the Committee of the Whole with my support.

Two bills that are waiting to be heard on General File are:

[SF0074 - Slow moving vehicles-amendments](#). This bill updates the existing speed limits for slow-moving vehicle emblems for farm and other equipment from 25 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour. We will hear this bill on Monday.

[SF0088 - Hunting licenses-weighted bonus points system](#). This bill emerged as a recommendation from Governor Gordon's Wildlife Taskforce. The bill would change the existing 28-year-old preference point and random draw system for bighorn sheep and moose. These two species have seen increased demand and declining supply resulting in an unsustainable point creep and the ability to draw a license. The Taskforce spent significant time and public outreach analyzing this topic. It ultimately recommended a weighted bonus point system as reflected in this bill. This change would make the draw 100% random. The number of existing and earned bonus points would be squared each year. Statistically, those with the most bonus points would have a better chance at drawing because their names would be in the license draw more often. This change would take effect in four years to honor the highest point holders with existing preference points. Existing preference points will roll over into bonus

points. As a member of the Taskforce, I did not support this approach. I believe this conversion to bonus points does not do enough to protect the existing high point holders in the draw.

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