

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you on February 7, the 20th day of the General Session of the 67th Legislature. We spent most of the day working through bills on 2nd Reading.

I will highlight four bills that were discussed today that all passed 2nd Reading.

[HJ0002 Constitutional Amendment-Residential Property Class](#). On the campaign trail, I heard from many of you the concern over rising property taxes. There's no easy fix to this issue. The problem is that residential property tax is combined with other property tax in the Wyoming Constitution, and our Constitution doesn't allow for the creation of subclasses. Without subclasses we cannot develop property tax solutions like other states have. To solve this issue, I brought this joint resolution that would separate residential real property into its own class of property for purposes of property tax assessments, and allow subclasses to be created.

[HB0098 - Property tax-homeowner's exemption](#). This bill doesn't solve the property tax problem, but it is another attempt to bring some relief. The bill provides a property tax exemption of up to \$50,000 in value for a homeowner, which works out to \$600 a year. This would apply for all residential property, not to exceed 25 percent of the total fair market value. To apply for the exemption, people must also be Wyoming residents for at least five years. There would be a 2-year sunset for this exemption and the bill sets aside \$40 million to defray the lost revenue that local government would incur. Still, there are concerns that this bill is not targeted enough relief and therefore would strain our local counties that rely on property tax income to provide the services to their county residents. I look forward to hearing more debate on 3rd Reading.

[HB0222 Colorado River Advisory Committee](#) This bill creates an advisory committee for the water users in the Colorado River Basin and helps give a voice and a seat at the decision-making table to Wyoming's water users. The committee would advise the state engineer's office, the Colorado River Commissioner and the Governor on the development and protection of water from the Green and Little Snake rivers relative to Wyoming's rights and obligations under the

Colorado River Compact and the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact. I am the prime sponsor of this bill.

[HB152 - Life is a Human Right Act](#) This bill had three amendments on 2nd Reading today, and all three failed. Each amendment aimed to tackle some of the constitutionality concerns expressed during yesterday's debate. I remain concerned about the constitutionality of this bill, and I am not sure that I will vote for the bill in 3rd Reading. Last session, I supported the trigger bill that banned abortion, and I think HB152 jeopardizes Wyoming's position in the court system. The bill moves on to 3rd Reading tomorrow.

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