

2/13/2022

Pre-Session Update

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne prior to the start of the 2022 Budget Session. The Legislature is constitutionally restricted to 60 session days for each two-year period of a legislative cycle. Therefore this session is scheduled for only 20 working days, because the 66th Legislature already utilized 40 days for the 2021 General Session.

The 66th Legislature has a lot to do in a very short time. One of the first items the House must take up is to a complaint submitted on January 22 to the Secretary of State's Office regarding the residency of a member of the Wyoming House of Representatives. The complaint alleges that Representative Dan Zwonitzer does not reside in the district he was elected in, as required by the Wyoming Constitution. The Secretary of State sent this complaint to the Speaker of the Wyoming House, because the Secretary of State has no authority over the qualifications of a legislator to hold office. The Wyoming Constitution, Article 3, Section 10 provides that each chamber of the Wyoming Legislature shall be the sole judge of the qualification of its members to serve in that chamber. I expect this issue will be debated early this week on the floor of the House.

The 2022 Budget Session has several important bills to debate, including the redistricting bill, the state budget bill, the legislative budget bill, the American Recovery Plan Act budget bill, the local government funding bill, the state capital construction bill, and a myriad of important interim committee bills.

A multitude of individual legislator bills has already been numbered for potential introduction, and many more could be filed before the submission deadline on Wednesday, February 16. Except for the redistricting bill and the state budget bill, all bills must receive a two-thirds majority vote to be introduced into a budget session. Legislators may vote to introduce bills, but that doesn't mean the bill will ultimately pass. Legislators tend to be more lenient in their introductory votes than they are after the bill has been thoroughly debated. During introduction, a bill sponsor gets just two minutes to explain the bill, followed by a one-minute

rebuttal by members, then a 30-second response to the rebuttal, and finally a roll call vote on introduction. Each bill requires about 10 minutes from start to finish, which means only six bills per hour can be debated for introduction.

I have five bills drafted for this session, but only four have been numbered for introduction.

[HB0015](#) - Political subdivision club liquor licenses, would allow Sublette County to continue its current policy of contracting out its liquor sales at the golf course, without having to transfer its liquor license to a vendor. This statute change is needed due to unintended consequences from a bill that passed last session.

[HB0025](#) - Lodging sales tax-exemption, simply conforms a newly passed statute to existing law and practice. Prior to the passage of HB134 in 2021 and still today, Wyoming law gives outfitters an exemption from local lodging tax. The exemption is only for temporary shelters, like tents and base camps, NOT for lodges that may be operated by an outfitter. HB25 would make outfitters' temporary shelters exempt from the statewide lodging tax passed in 2021, just as they are now exempt from the local lodging tax. Outfitters sell an experience, a trip, a hunt, and have never itemized tent stays in their invoices to clients.

[HB0050](#) - BOCES as local education agencies, provides that any board of cooperative educational services may act as a local education agency for participating school districts that choose to apply for, receive or administer a grant through a federal or state grant program. HB50 does not allow a BOCES to be eligible for K12 block grant funding.

[HB0072](#) - Hunting license application funds, allows an unsuccessful hunter the opportunity to donate his submitted fees to either the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust Fund or the hunter access account that was created last session with an increase in the conservation fee. There is an increasing need for wildlife habitat improvement, hunter access, and wildlife crossing projects, and this provides an opportunity for hunters to donate to conservation and hunter access.

I look forward to comments and questions as the session progresses. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com with questions or comments. I occasionally miss seeing an email from my constituents, and for that I apologize. At times, I get hundreds of emails and texts a day. The Legislative website can be accessed at <https://wyoleg.gov/>