

News Release



WYOMING SENATE DISTRICT 3

FOR RELEASE Immediately
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STEINMETZ AND WILLIAMS RETURN TO CHEYENNE AS WYOMING LEGISLATURE CONVENES 2022 BUDGET SESSION

CHEYENNE – Senator Cheri Steinmetz and Representative JD Williams will continue to work for their constituents at the 66th Wyoming Legislature, convening in a Joint Session of the Wyoming Senate and House of Representatives on Monday, Feb. 14 at 10 a.m.

"This session will prove to be very challenging as we deal with redistricting, the state budget and disbursement of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. All of these decisions will set the course of the state for the next decade," Senator Steinmetz said.

Representative Williams, who was appointed to House District 2 in 2021, is entering his first budget session after serving immediately upon appointment in the COVID mandate special session.

"This session will be a great opportunity to learn about the state budget and work on issues important to my constituents," Representative Williams said. "I plan to study the bills being presented intently, as I have decided to wait to sponsor legislation of my own due to the intensity of the session."

Valentine's Day will mark the first day of legislative proceedings of the 2022 Budget Session. At that time, Gov. Mark Gordon will deliver his State of the State message, followed by the State of the Judiciary message, delivered by Wyoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Kate M. Fox.

Following the Joint Session, the bodies will hold opening ceremonies and begin introducing legislation in their respective chambers at 2 p.m. All floor proceedings and committee meetings during the 2022 Budget Session will be broadcast live via the Wyoming Legislature's YouTube channel.

The Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC), on which Senator Cheri Steinmetz serves, recommends several differences from the Governor's/Judicial budget plan. Regarding the budget, the difference is net \$81.2 million more than the Governor's recommendations: **including \$142.5 million appropriated for savings. The JAC also recommends \$61.3 million less in appropriations intended to be expended.**

"The Senate Appropriations Committee had a goal to save as much money as we possibly could from the ARPA funds. Roughly 20% of the revenue the State of Wyoming receives comes from our

investment earnings. Savings in permeant funds translates into perpetual earnings in the years to come and decreases the push by some to raise taxes in the future. **The State of Wyoming is flush with money right now. It is no time to increase taxes on our citizens,**" Steinmetz explained.

The second goal of the Senate Appropriations Committee was to fund infrastructure projects. We have allocated \$100 million to be dispersed by the State Land and Investment Board (SLIB) for local infrastructure projects."

The Governor's/Judicial total recommendations are at \$2.8 billion; whereas the JAC's total recommendations are \$2.874 billion. Major differences in the JAC recommendations include: \$142.5 million more in savings (compared to the Governor's recommendations); \$7 million more in revenue transfer through the Mineral Royalty Grant program; and net \$61 million less in net spending.

"Due to the heavy workload of the appropriations committee, I am only running one bill as the prime sponsor which limits private funds in conducting elections," Senator Steinmetz said. "Secretary of State Buchanan has been a proponent of the bill, which is designed to insure election integrity. I will have a later update with more bills of interest as session moves along.

"Redistricting is one of the main issues we will be dealing with this session. Unfortunately, the Joint Corporations Committee has adopted a redistricting plan that grows government and dilutes the rural vote. They have added three legislative seats which result in 62 Representatives and 31 Senators. This session will definitely be one to keep an eye on," said Senator Steinmetz.

Questions regarding the 2022 Joint Session should be directed to Ryan Frost at the Legislative Service Office at (307) 777-7881, and questions regarding Gov. Gordon's State of the State address should be directed to Michael Pearlman at (307) 777-7434. To follow online go to wyoleg.gov.

About Senator Cheri Steinmetz:

Senator Steinmetz represents Goshen, Niobrara, and Weston counties. She is a member of the Appropriations Committee and previously served on the following Senate committees: Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources; Transportation, Highways, & Military Affairs; and the Select Committee on Legislative Facilities, Technology and Process. She began serving in the Wyoming State Senate in 2019. Previously, Senator Steinmetz represented House District 5 from 2015 to 2018. More information may be found at wyoleg.gov.

About Representative JD Williams:

Representative Williams represents Wyoming House District 2, comprised of northern Goshen, Niobrara, and southern Weston counties. He is a member of the Travel, Recreation, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Committee. He was appointed in 2021 to fill the House District 2 vacancy left by the Honorable Hans Hunt. More information may be found at wyoleg.gov.

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