

News Release



WYOMING SENATE DISTRICT 3

FOR RELEASE Immediately
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LEGISLATORS DIRECT MORE FUNDING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, BUDGET BILL HEADS TO GOVERNOR

CHEYENNE – Lawmakers readied the budget bill for the governor’s office last week, with additional funds allotted for local governments and infrastructure.

“On Thursday, we passed House Bill 42 on third reading, which is local government distributions,” Senator Cheri Steinmetz said. “That bill contains \$120 million for local governments. It is the regular operation bill that we normally pass - it usually comes out of our ‘rainy day’ account or the LSRA (Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account) account, and it is usually \$105 million. But this year, we decided to send out \$120 million to our local governments since we had had an influx of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding.”

On Friday, in the Senate on Committee of the Whole - which is first reading - lawmakers saw House Bill 29 Hathaway Scholarship Amendments, allowing for more money to flow into the Hathaway Scholarship Fund. Senators also deliberated House Bill 63 County and District Attorney - Salary Amendments, which gives county commissioners the power to decide whether to give pay raises to the county and district attorneys.

“Basically, right now the cap is set in statute, and so there’s no leeway,” Senator Steinmetz explained.

Senators also continued work on House Bill 147 Cash Based Budget Development. This is a bill, as well as a footnote in the overall budget.

“Passage of the bill or the footnote would allow us to consider going to a cash-based budgeting system on an annual basis,” Senator Steinmetz said. “Right now, we are on a two-year cycle with the state budget, and we work off of projections from the CREG (Consensus Revenue Estimating Group) report of estimated revenues. Many of us feel it might be prudent to take a look at spending only what we have in our accounts - I hope that we will move forward with this project.”

In addition, progress was made on the budget with the Conference Committee. Conference Committees are made up of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees. On Friday, March 4, Senator Steinmetz reported the groups were ironing out a few small details in the budget, with hopes to have it finished by Monday. Lawmakers then refer the bill to the governor’s office. Gov. Mark Gordon will have three days to make any line-item vetoes.

Senator Steinmetz said she hopes to have the budget back by the middle of this week, so legislators have the opportunity to override any vetoes, if necessary, before adjourning the budget session on Friday, March 11.

“We also heard that Senate File 66 American Rescue Plan Act Recovery Funds Appropriations has passed the House in an amended form,” Senator Steinmetz said. “The House spent more. This is a very rich plan as far as local governments are concerned. Several of the monies will be distributed through the State Land Investment Board. As it left the Senate, there was \$100 million for local governments. Basically, there was \$50 million that was not directed to any specific project and another \$50 million for water and sewer projects. There is a lot of money contained in the bill.

“There are several other pots of money for hospitals and emergency management and some other things. We will definitely get information to our local governments, as far as what is available for their application and how they can proceed forward and try to apply for some of the direct ARPA funds.”

Senate File 67 State Funded Capital Construction passed the House on third reading, which includes all state building projects, as well as major maintenance. K-12 is contained in the main budget.

On Thursday, the Senate passed House Bill 100 Redistricting of the Legislature.

“The Senate passed the bill out as we worked on it during the interim, which is the 60-House member, 30-Senate plan - the current construct of the Legislature now,” Senator Steinmetz said. “We worked on this bill quite extensively over the interim as regional approaches and had several meetings with constituents and county clerks.

“The Senate felt it was prudent to proceed in the 60/30 plan with all the work that had been done over the interim. As you recall, the House passed a 62-House member, 31-Senate member plan. This means work will have to be done at the Joint Conference Committee to reconcile those two positions and see how we move the state forward on redistricting.”

As always, you can find more information, track bills and see how they have been amended, or watch the Session live at 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.

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