

News Release



WYOMING SENATE DISTRICT 3

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SESSION REACHES HALFWAY POINT, BUDGET WORK WRAPS UP

CHEYENNE – The State Senate has finished budget deliberation and put \$1 billion dollars into permanent savings accounts.

“We will see if that position holds as the bill makes its way over to the House,” Senator Cheri Steinmetz said.

Monday, Feb. 6 was the last day on committee of the whole, meaning any Senate file or House bills on first reading had to be out of their house of origin by the end of the week.

“We heard some important bills yesterday (Monday, Feb. 6),” Senator Steinmetz said, referring to unemployment insurance coverage, which would change the reporting period and shorten it to 20 weeks instead of 26; carbon capture and sequestration, a bill that allows for carbon sequestration to enhance oil recovery; and Chloe’s Law - children gender change prohibition, which makes it illegal for doctors to perform gender-change surgery on or give drugs to minors.

“We considered state-funded capital construction, which is the state building bill, and provides for all the capital construction across the state, excluding school capital construction,” Senator Steinmetz said. “There’s a lot of pork in this bill, so we’ll see how that comes out.”

Senators also heard a bill on election security; and an alternative teaching certificate that came out of the education committee, which provides for a process by which someone who has not gone to school to be a teacher, but is a professional, or has had a long, distinguished career, can be certified and teach in the state’s K-12 schools.

“We also have two bills: Stop Environmental Social Governance (ESG)-eliminate economic boycott act and Stop ESG-state-funded funds fiduciary act - those two bills will be up on third reading,” Senator Steinmetz said. “We’ve been doing a lot of work with the state treasurer’s office to make sure we can get those bills through. ESG is part of a global movement to control us through those aspects of our lives, and we want to make sure our people, our industries and the state’s investments are protected from ESG.”

Tuesday night, Feb. 7, in State Senate Ag, senators heard three bills: two bills dealing with state land leases, which are state land leasing improvements, allowing the limitation to be raised from \$2000 to \$4,000; the land-exchange notice, which adds language in how land exchanges are noticed; and **HB0093 Omnibus water bill construction**.

“This is one of our annual bills, which deals with all the water-construction projects across the state, from irrigation, to municipal projects, to small water projects. This is a vital bill for the State of Wyoming and for all of our citizens,” Senator Steinmetz said.

The Senate is now considering House bills, as the House is considering the Senate bills.

“One important bill this session is **HB0070 Definition of home-based educational program**,” Senator Steinmetz said. “It’s basically a small change in the law, which would allow homeschoolers to co-op or combine as family units or groups of homeschoolers to offer educational programs.

“Currently, the definition of a home-based educational program is one family unit, and more than that, is basically against the law.

“As you know, we’re doing a lot of education choice bills this year. We’re dealing with charter schools, which are public schools, and publicly funded. I have sponsored the Wyoming Freedom Scholarship, which provides \$6,000 for parents to direct funding to an educational entity that would provide educational resources and services to students.

“These are all landmark bills in educational freedom across Wyoming, and they’re in response to what parents have been asking for.”

Another bill up for consideration on general file Thursday was **HB0185 Local government distributions bill**.

“As in the past, we have always given the local governments \$105 million per biennium,” Senator Steinmetz said. “In the last budget, we increased that to \$120 million, and this bill would increase it to \$130 million. That is an increase for local governments to provide services on the ground to community residents.”

The Agricultural State and Public Lands and Water Resources Committee meeting took place Thursday upon adjournment. The Senate was expected to be in recess on Friday.

Thursday night, the Senate heard **HB0021 State lands use of land qualification and requirements**.

“This is a bill that actually requires that a lessee of state lands for grazing and agricultural purposes, must have actual and necessary use of the land for those purposes,” Senator Steinmetz said. “That’s an important piece of legislation for those holding state leases in the State of Wyoming.

“We also have the state land lease deficiency cure process, which is **HB0022**,” Senator Steinmetz said. “We have experienced problems with land being categorized as vacant land when landowners/lessees actually hold the lease or have purchased the lease with a property.”

“HB0022 is designed to clean that up to require notice no later than 40 days before expiration of an existing lease. The bill will provide clarity for the Office of State Lands and Investments regarding how state leases are noticed before they become vacant land.”

Senator Cheri Steinmetz serves as Chairman of the Agriculture, State and Public Lands and Water Resources Committee and Vice Chairman of the Education Committee. Contact Information: (307)534-5342; e-mail: cheri.steinmetz@wyoleg.gov

“We have reached the halfway point of the legislative session,” Representative Allen Slagle said.

Wednesday, the House had approximately 20 more Senate bills read into the general file and then, after second reading of those bills, began third reading of the 27 bills that passed second reading.

“These will be the last bills to come out of the House this year,” Representative Slagle said. “Some you might be interested in are: **HB004 Medicaid 12-month postpartum coverage** - this is Medicaid expansion, and I will be voting against this bill; **HB0098 Property tax homeowners exemption** - I will probably be voting for tax relief here; **HB0095 Working animal protection act** - this bill prevents municipalities from regulating against events like rodeos, horse-drawn carriage rides, and the like - I will be voting for this bill; **HB0108 Sale of THC vaping devices and edibles to minors prohibited** - this bill is for the protection of our children, I will be voting for it; **HB0143 Health mandates CDC and WHO jurisdiction in Wyoming** - this bill says that the CDC and World Health Organization can’t dictate policy in Wyoming; **HB0152 Life is a human right act** - this bill is fixing the issues the court is identifying with the trigger bill that passed last year, I will be voting for this bill; **HB0154 Permanent vehicle registration** - this bill makes it so that after 20 years, you can apply for a permanent registration, which will cost \$87.50 plus five times the yearly amount prescribed by statute - I will be voting for this bill, as well; **HB0188 Wolf depredation compensation** - this bill is just like what it sounds like: if a wolf kills an animal, the state will pay compensation - I will be voting for this bill; **HB0276 Shed antlers and horns permit** - this makes shed antlers and horns property of the state and requires a permit to collect them - I will be voting ‘no’ on this bill.

“All these votes will depend on possible amendments. Twenty-seven bills for third reading is going to be a long day,” Representative Slagle said.

“It is great hearing from you, and we will continue to try to respond to emails, as time permits.”

Representative Allen Slagle serves on the Agriculture, State and Public Lands and Water Resources Committee. Contact information: (307)306-7384; e-mail: allen.slagle@wyoleg.gov

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More information about the legislative session can be found at wyoleg.gov.

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