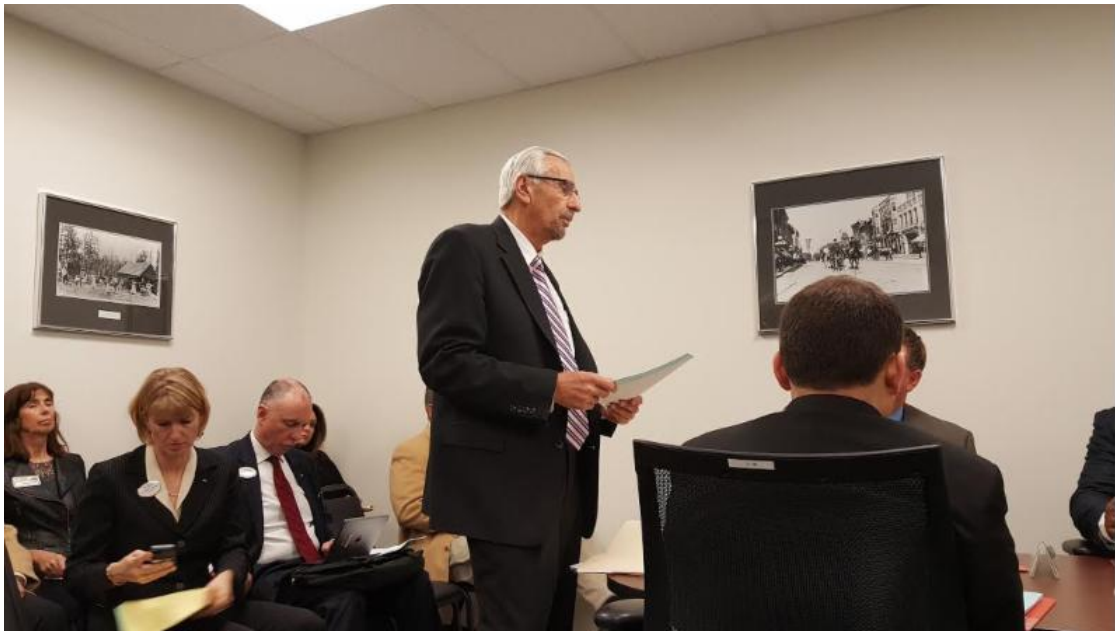


Wyoming Business Alliance

Week Four - 64th Wyoming Legislature February 11, 2017 [Download the Bill Tracker for Week 5](#)

OVERVIEW

This year's Legislative session is marching along. As predicted in our previous weekly reports, the majority of the action circulates around money...or in reality, the lack thereof. Wyoming has had budget fluctuations in the past but not to the extent looming today. Back around 2000, the General Fund was expecting a \$180 million shortfall. That's a far cry from the \$251 million already cut in the current biennium and legislators now looking to scale back spending by another \$151 million. Then scanning out to the biennium beginning July 1, 2018, there is the \$360 million or so K-12 shortfall. Add misery to misery... Energy boom times expand tax revenues, and abundant revenues lead to more spending. Bust times impose contradictions and conflictions.



Senate President Eli Bebout in the House Minerals and Economic Development Committee meeting.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[ENDOW--Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming](#)--has all-star support. The bill, SF 132, has among its sponsors Senate President Eli Bebout and Speaker of the House Steve Harshman. It has cleared the Senate and on Wednesday was approved by the House Minerals and Economic Development Committee 8-1. It focuses on a 20-year strategic plan for the state with aligned proactive participation from the Wyoming Business Council, Workforce Services Department, Community Colleges, and the University...plus powerhouse legislator involvement and direction from a 15 member Executive Committee. The Business Alliance spoke in favor of the bill. Others in favor included the Governor's Office, Wyoming Business Council, Wyoming Retail and Lodging Association, Wyoming Municipalities Association, and the Wyoming Mining Association. It passed the Committee 8-1.

The Wyoming Business Council's funding continues to be compromised. While most state agencies have seen reductions in the 10 percent range over the past year, the Business Council has been cut by 37 percent. Additional cuts are now being floated via amendments, including moving \$80,000 to cover Tribal Liaison; \$150,000 for the State Fair; \$193,705 to the DEQ; \$2.7 million to the State Engineers Office for water development; \$400,000 to the Department of Health; and \$200,000 in staffing reductions. Another \$3.7 million in cuts is an unfortunate commentary. The Business Council was created to help grow Wyoming's economy. The Business Alliance was instrumental in its creation. Continued reductions and unraveling, no doubt will compromise its present good work.



Senate Minerals Committee discussed Ski Safety Bill last Monday.

ACTION NEEDED...COMMUNICATE WITH STATE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES

[Ski Safety Act--HB 32](#)--was approved by the Senate Minerals Committee on Wednesday. The bill is really about inherent risks and lawyering was ever present with a multitude of what-if scenarios. It passed the Committee, but floor action might be trying. The Business Alliance supports the bill and spoke, stating Wyoming ski operators should be on equal footing with neighboring states. Speaking also in favor

were Hogadon Ski Basin, Ski Wyoming, Jackson Hole Ski Resort. The Wyoming Trial Lawyers oppose the bill.

EDUCATION

Last week's report attempted to compare the two major bills--[HB 236](#) and [SF 165](#). The House bill adds a .5 percent sales tax only if the Rainy Day Fund of \$1.6 billion falls below \$500 million. The level of cuts in the House bill is less than the Senate. The Senate bill as amended cuts K-12 education spending by north of \$60 million, not even close to resolving the \$360 million shortfall. It cuts the block grants to school districts over time by 5 percent. More could come, depending on recalibration efforts which, if they occur, will have packed educator wish lists and appeals to maintain current spending levels. At the heart of K-12 education funding is the model for equal and quality education.

SUMMARY

Week five of the eight-week session is over. Of the 485 bills once in the hopper, easily over 200 won't move forward. The legislature will continue to grapple with spending reductions for the current biennium, including [SF 95](#) which as passed the Senate to encourage early retirement for state employees and another idea which is to cut state employee pay by 2 percent. Tough times indeed. All the more reason to focus 100 percent of our energies on growing the Wyoming economy and tax base.

LEGISLATIVE BILL MATRIX

[Download the Bill Tracker for Week 5](#)

The Wyoming Business Alliance Legislative Matrix is attached with the bills being tracked and a status on where they are in the legislative process. It is divided into six categories either being supported in green, opposed in red or being monitored in black. Please let us know if there are any bills of interest to you not represented so we can list them in the future.

I. ECONOMIC STRENGTH BILLS

1. **HB0004 NRC agreement state amendments. (Support)**
2. **HB0032 Ski Safety Act.(Support)**
3. **HB253 Economic development account funding. (Support)**
4. **SF0070 Manufacturing machinery exemption sunset date. (Support)**
5. **SF0132 ENDOW Initiative (Support)**
6. SF0024 Film industry financial incentive program. (Monitor)
7. SF164 Energy strategic plan. (Support) - Failed to make cutoff

II. QUALITY OF LIFE BILLS

1. **SF0050 Civics educational programs. (Support)**
2. SF0069 Small employer health reinsurance program amendments. (Monitor)
3. **HB0133 Civics proficiency examination. (Support) - Failed in Committee**
4. SF0171 Civic proficiency examination-2. (Support) - Failed

III. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. **SF0140 I-80 project master plan. (Support)**
2. HB0052 Governmental immunity-cooperative public transportation. (Monitor)
3. HB0086 Omnibus water bill-construction. (Monitor)
4. HB0118 Purchase of water rights and facilities. (Monitor)
5. SF0003 Transfer of water funds. (Monitor)
6. SF0008 Transfer of Water Funds (Monitor)
7. SF0051 Approval of water funds transfer. (Monitor)
8. SF0056 Omnibus water bill-planning.(Monitor)
9. **HB0234 Airport support. (Monitor/Support) - Failed to make cutoff**
10. **SF0058 Instream flow rights-acquisition. (Monitor) -Withdrawn by Sponsor**
11. **SF0071 Electricity production standard. (Monitor) - Failed to make cutoff**
12. **SF0080 Instream flow rights-acquisition-2. (Monitor) - Failed to be introduced**

IV. GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND TAXES

1. **HJ0002 Balanced budget amendment-resolution. (Support)**
2. **SF0156 State government efficiencies. (Support)**
3. HB0001 General Government appropriations. (Monitor)
4. HB0013 Investment of public funds. (Monitor)
5. HB0060 State investment policy. (Monitor)
6. HB0082 Local optional sales and use taxes. (Monitor)
7. HB0267 LC and corporation license fees. (Monitor)
8. SF0001 General Government appropriations. (Monitor)
9. SF0041 Enterprise technology services amendments.(Monitor)
10. **HB0010 Oil and gas tax reporting. (Monitor)- Died in Committee**
11. **HB0012 Tax exemption repeals. (Monitor) - Failed in Committee**
12. **HB0067 Determination of agricultural land for taxation. (Monitor) - Died in Committee**
13. **HB0102 Lodging tax rate. (Oppose) - Failed in Committee**
14. **HB0104 Severance tax on coal. (Monitor) -Failed in Committee**
15. **HB0105 LSRA-limitations on appropriations. (Support) - Died in Committee**
16. **HB0127 Wind energy production tax-2. (Monitor) - Failed in Committee**
17. **HB0134 Taxable value of industrial property. (Monitor) - Failed in Committee**
18. **HB0149 Lodging tax distribution. (Oppose) - Failed in Committee**
19. **HJ0001 Convention for proposing constitutional amendments. (Monitor)- Failed**
20. **HJ0005 Mineral excise tax deposits-constitutional amendment. (Monitor) -Failed in Committee**
21. **HJ0006 Budget shortfall reserve accounts. (Monitor) -Died in Committee**
22. **SF0159 Tax reform 2000. (Monitor) -Failed to make cutoff**

V. PUBLIC LANDS

1. **SF0078 Federal natural resource policy account. (Support)**
2. SF0072 2017 Large project funding. (Monitor)
3. SJ0002 Federal land wind and solar energy revenue-state share. (Monitor)
4. **SJ0003 Public lands-Constitutional amendment. (Monitor) -Failed to be introduced**

VI. EDUCATION

1. **HB0027 School facility property insurance. (Support)**
2. **HB0076 American Indian education program. (Support)**

3. **HB0126 Elementary school foreign language requirement. (Support)**
4. **HB0225 Select committee on education funding. (Support)**
5. **SF0037 Education-Hathaway scholarship program-2. (Support)**
6. **SF0165 School finance-education funding reductions. (Monitor/Support)**
7. **SJ0009 Public school financing. (Support)**
8. **HB0236 School finance-omnibus education funding. (Monitor/oppose)**
9. HB0037 Teacher accountability. (Monitor)
10. HB0040 Education accountability. (Monitor)
11. HB0058 School facilities appropriations. (Monitor)
12. SF0036 Education-leader evaluation and support. (Monitor)
13. **HB0108 School finance-K-12 class sizes. (Support) - Failed to be introduced**
14. **HB0110 Education-continuing contract status. (Support) - Failed to be introduced**
15. **HB0233 State or school employment contract compensation reduction. (Monitor) -Died in Committee**
16. **HB0243 School finance-capital construction funding. (Monitor) -Died in Committee**
17. **SF0073 High school graduation requirements. (Support) - Failed on the Floor**
18. **SF0114 Education reform. (Support) -Failed to make cutoff**
19. **SF0135 Education funds used for litigation. (Support) -Failed to make cutoff**

Best regards,

**Bill Schilling
President**

Wyoming Business Alliance/Wyoming Heritage Association

Wyoming Business Alliance

The Wyoming Business Alliance is a statewide nonprofit organization representing the voice of business in the state. It is dedicated to promoting and advocating for a growing economy by connecting business leaders from across Wyoming, representing business interests and issues, and partnering with key

business organizations and trade associations. The organization was founded in 1979 as Wyoming Heritage Society and Wyoming Heritage Foundation. Policies for the Wyoming Business Alliance are set by our Steering Committee. The Steering Committee has 45 members who serve for three-year terms, plus 18 leaders from state business and trade organizations. Visit www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com.



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