

The 65th Wyoming Legislature convened January 8, 2019 and concluded its first week on January 11, 2019. To date there have been 133 House Bills, 47 Senate bills and 6 Joint Resolutions introduced. While many of these bills have no impact on WAM, or the cities and towns in Wyoming, there are several that will impact Wyoming Municipalities.

As of January 11th, WAM is tracking 40 House Bills, and 25 Senate Bills. We expect the number of bills that will be introduced to grow significantly between now and January 27th (the last day a bill can be introduced). Therefore, the number of bills WAM will be tracking will increase as well.

First Week Highlights

Although there is not yet a supplemental budget bill filed, the Governor's recommended \$25 million for cities, towns and counties. If approved by the legislature, the supplemental budget will provide \$20 million for the Consensus Block Grant Program and \$5 million in Direct Distribution. The Direct Distribution funds would be allocated as set forth by the commonly referred to Madden Formula; it is unlikely that a bill will be introduced to modify the formula.

The WAM Website www.wyomuni.org contains information on all the bills we are tracking and identifies bills that directly and indirectly relate to WAM. The following is a summary of several of the most important bills WAM is tracking. Please note these are not all of the bills we are following, but the ones that most directly affect our members. As noted, the full legislative summaries and bill status are on the WAM website.

House Bill 36 - This bill provides that Counties may implement a mail in ballot election. WAM is monitoring this bill, and it failed in Committee.

House Bill 52 – This bill deals with public works and contracts and modifies the requirements for procurement of furniture and movable equipment in capital construction projects. WAM is in support of this bill.

House Bill 66 – This bill would impose a 5% statewide lodging tax on short term lodging. Of this amount 3% would be used to fund the Department of Tourism (effectively taking it out of the state general fund), and 2% would be sent back to the local governments. The distribution and use of the local funds would be the same as with the current lodging tax legislation. WAM is supporting this bill.

House Bill 67 – This bill would reduce the state sales tax from 4% to 3.5%. It would also eliminate a number of exemptions and imposes sales tax on services (e.g. engineering, architectural, etc.). The intent of the bill is to be revenue neutral. Expect this to be a lively debate. WAM is monitoring this bill.

House Bill 69 - This bill would impose a sales tax on "market facilitators". This bill essentially imposes a sales tax on internet sales. The most affected company with this bill would be

Amazon, Backcounty.com Esty, etc. The bill is expected to generate an additional \$3.5 million for cities, towns and counties in FY 2020. WAM is supporting this bill.

House Bill 81 – This bill provides funding for water planning projects. WAM is supporting this bill.

House Bill 95 – This bill authorizes the distribution and expenditure of excess taxes collected for a specific purpose. WAM is supporting this bill.

House Bill 96 – This bill imposes an additional tax on wind energy production. WAM opposes this bill.

House Bill 105 - This bill prohibits municipalities from seeking to recover fees for non-payment of water, sanitary sewer, electric and sanitation bills. This typically occurs when a tenant fails to pay for these services. WAM is opposing this bill.

Senate File 16 – This bill allows for the creation of community development districts within municipal boundaries at the request of the property owners. WAM is monitoring this bill.

Senate File 20 – This bill grants cities and towns the authority to fund water drainage systems by imposing a fee. WAM is supporting this bill.

Senate File 29 – This bill provides funds for landfill management closures and transfer centers. WAM supports this bill.

Senate File 48 – This bill addresses seasonal worker unemployment compensation. WAM supports this bill.

Senate File 49 - This bill preempts Counties from using zoning to regulate private schools. It essentially treats a private school with 35 acres and 50 students from like a public school. WAM is monitoring this bill.

Senate File 59 – This bill provides funding for water construction projects. WAM is supporting this bill.

Senate File 57 – This bill modifies how local governments and other must process public records requests. It requires the release of public records within a specified time; requires the designation of a public records person for each political subdivision of the state; requires applications for public records to be made to the designated public records person, modifies penalties and provides remedies for violations of the public records act. WAM is monitoring this bill.

Senate File 75 – This bill repeals gun free zones and preempts local government authority. WAM is monitoring this bill.

Senate File 79 – This bill allows local government employers to select coverage through the state’s employees’ and officials’ group insurance programs. WAM is supporting this bill.

Tracking Bills on Line

The WAM website contains all the information about the bills and their status in the legislative process. If you prefer to see this data in the excel format, you can click the excel button and it will format the information into an excel spread sheet. A direct link can be found at

<https://wyomuni.org/follow-legislation>

If you have questions about any legislative issue, please do not hesitate to call Bob McLaurin (307) 413-3483, or Rick Kaysen at (307) 287-4218.