
WEEK ONE LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY – JANUARY 15, 2023

The 2023 session kicked off on Tuesday with swearing in of the Legislators of the 67th and the State of the State delivered by Governor Gordon on Wednesday. This session will be marked with continued effort to expand Medicaid, improve funding for mental health resources, grant residential property tax relief, and balance the ever-present challenge of saving vs. investing. WACCT is actively involved in a broad-based coalition focused on the myriad of property tax relief bills. Several bills work to augment the programs currently in statute. However, several significantly alter the way Wyoming's property tax system would work, limiting the users of the tax dollars and possibly resulting in unintended negative consequences for the state. Stay tuned.

The Governor's message centered on five areas: people, natural resources, energy, the state's budget, and the children of Wyoming. Here are a few items of interest from his speech:

- Continued investment and attention to mental health resources in Wyoming.
- Recognition of first responders, the Wyoming National Guard servicemen and women and their families, veterans, FFA participants, and tribal leaders
- Wyoming serves as a national leader in carbon capture technology.
- The joint hydrogen hub with Colorado and New Mexico
- Water usage of the Colorado River Basin and using federal funds efficiently for water infrastructure
- The leanest state budget in decades
- Inflationary concerns
- Property tax relief program
- Employee compensation
- Building a skilled workforce through the Wyoming Innovation Partnership
- Investing in our future through the Reimagining and Innovating the Delivery of Education (RIDE) Advisory group recommendations
- Nod to the First Lady's Wyoming Hunger Initiative

[Watch the address](#)

[Read prepared comments](#)

[Read press release](#)

KEY DEADLINES ([click here for the full schedule](#)):

- Monday, January 23 - **Legislature Will Not Convene for MLK recognition**
- Thursday, January 26 – last day for Senate Files to be introduced
- Monday, January 30 – Budget Bill-Committee of the Whole
- Tuesday, January 31 - Last day for House Bills to be introduced
- Friday, February 3 - Last day for Bills to be reported out of the Committee in the house of origin
- Monday, February 20 -**Legislature Will Not Convene for President's Day recognition**
- Friday, February 28 - Last day for Bills to be reported out of Committee in the second house
- Wednesday, March 1- Last day for Third Reading in the second house
- Friday, March 3 - Adjourn

JANUARY CREG UPDATE

Wyoming is still flush with federal COVID-19 money and unexpected revenue from a strong oil and gas year in 2022, and lawmakers will have to balance decisions about saving or investing. The January Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG) update was driven by higher oil and natural gas prices, decreased investment income, but modestly increased royalties from state lands. Remember, the CREG does not forecast capital gains or capital losses. The bottom line is that lawmakers will have an additional \$2.6M available. Recall the October report yielded \$329.4M in excess revenues. In terms of Federal ARPA dollars, Wyoming still had \$33.8M available (a separate bill to allocate ARPA funds will run separate from the budget bill). [Click here for the January CREG update.](#)

BILLS OF INTEREST THIS WEEK

- **HB 28 – Community College Capital Construction** – Passed House Education Committee on 1/11 with just one “no” vote. It was amended to be effective immediately and increased to \$500,000, but this amendment was rejected on the House floor. WACCT testified in favor.
- **HB 29 – Community College Funding- Distance Education Credit Hours** – Passed House Education Committee on 1/11 unanimously but had some difficulty on the House floor and barely passed a voice vote on general file. Here are some general talking points for the bill – a more detailed one-pager will be available on the WACCT website and has been provided to the members.
 - HB 28 is intended to more accurately reflect the cost of delivery for online instruction for Community Colleges.
 - It simply removes the lesser weight assigned to online instruction and allows the course to be weighted on the face of the class. Colleges with higher proportions of face-to-face lecture courses are disproportionately impacted by the levels of instruction (LOI) changes and, frankly, disincentivized to deliver online.
 - This will more accurately allocate the dollars to the colleges for the cost of class delivery.
 - This bill only addresses one small element of the recalibration and funding allocation model process for the colleges and will have a minimal fiscal impact only upon recalibration every four years. In the meantime, it simply re-apportions the legislatively approved state aid for the colleges.
- **Budget bill “Round Robin”** – the Joint Appropriations Committee worked this week to review the December 2022 work on the budget and add their stamp as a new committee. The colleges were included in a global motion to increase employee compensation (more details to come), support the WCCC supplemental request for their capital construction computer software, and fully funding the Wyoming’s Tomorrow Scholarship Program with an additional \$40M. Once we see the official budget bill, we will know more.
- **HB 30** – Wyoming’s Tomorrow Scholarship Program Amendments– in House Education Monday 1/16
- **HB 109** – Wyoming Works for Tomorrow – in House Education Monday 1-16

Please visit the [WACCT webpage \(Advocacy page and 2023 Resources\)](#) for the WACCT Bill Tracking, Legislative priorities, and talking points.

WEEKLY ZOOM

Remember, WACCT hosts weekly conference/Zoom calls to keep you updated on **Fridays at 10am**.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84012002625?pwd=MG9UWIV4MkZKNjl6MVp0eGFOMkhEQT09>

- Meeting ID: 840 1200 2625
- Passcode: 032653
- 1-669-444-9171