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## FINAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY MARCH 14, 2022

The Wyoming Legislature ended the 2022 budget session on Friday, March 11th after a fast and furious four weeks. Although this was a budget session and lawmakers had significant decisions to make both with increased general funds and ARPA dollars, they still managed to take considerable time discussing gun rights, abortion, election reform and transgender participation on women's sports teams. They did however, come to consensus at the 11th hour on legislative redistricting adding two House seats and one additional Senate seat.

There is no doubt, the visibility of the Community Colleges has elevated. We were in the middle of sustainable funding discussions, the budget bill, the ARPA bill, capital construction, Wyoming's Tomorrow, trustee elections, and more. We also enjoyed tremendous support from our business partners!

### BUDGET SUMMARY

The 2023-24 biennium budget was one of the most frugal seen in a decade, and ARPA funding was appropriated for special projects and saved for the future at the governor's request:

- \$2.7 biennial budget
- \$400 million less than the 2021-2022 budget
- \$103 million less in the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (rainy day fund)
- \$75 million of the budget is being set aside to use as grant matches for the Congressional infrastructure funding due to hit states next year.
- Increases for state employee compensation (\$64.8 million), including higher education
- \$100 million for purposes of providing matching funds for private or federal funding for research, demonstration, pilot projects or commercial deployment projects related to Wyoming energy needs, including, but not limited to, carbon capture utilization and storage, carbon dioxide transportation, industrial carbon capture, coal refinery, and hydrogen production, transportation, storage, hydrogen hub development, biomass, biochar, hydropower, battery storage or wind and solar energy.
- \$7.5 million ongoing for the Community Colleges state aid
- \$200,000 for community college rodeo teams
- \$27 million for the Wyoming Innovative Partnership and funding for a coordinator in the Governor's Office
- The January fiscal projections used \$60 (per barrel oil), and prices are now upwards of \$100/barrel, so the state is likely to have significant opportunity to replenish rainy day funds and make investments in the near future.

### SF 66 – ARPA BILL

Invests one-time ARPA dollars for several areas, including healthcare, broadband, workforce training, etc. \$431M for the next two years. Covers funding for the Wyoming Investment in Nursing Program and Wyoming Works.

### BILLS OF INTEREST

- **HB 29 – Hathaway Scholarship Amendments** – Failed
- **HB 31 – Wyoming's Tomorrow Scholarship Program** – Signed by the Governor March 11
- **SF 43 – Community College Trustee Election** – Signed by the Governor March 11
- **SF 67 – State Funded Cap Con** – passed both houses and funds all Community College projects

- For a full list of all the bills WACCT was tracking, please see our Bill Tracking Sheet as posted to the website.



*Figure 1 Cindy DeLancey Supporting HB 31*



*Figure 2 WACCT Executive Director speaking to HB 31*



*Figure 3 Governor Gordon speaking to HB 31*



*Figure 4 Broad Supporters of HB 31*

## INTERIM TOPICS

The Management Council will meet on April 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss interim topics. The Community College should expect to see interest from the Joint Education Committee. The dates for the Joint Education Committee are set:

- May 31 – June 1 Casper
- September 6/7 Cheyenne
- October 10 Cheyenne
- November 15-16 Cheyenne

## WHAT'S NEXT

- Expect to hear from Erin Taylor about how to communicate with your legislators about the legislative session. We got support from some legislators one day and not the next. No doubt, there were a lot of votes for community colleges issues and not everyone voted in the same manner or even on the same side of the issues. One thing is certain in politics – you may not agree on an issue today, but you may need that vote tomorrow – relationships matter! One thing I will ask you all to do is THANK your legislators. Even if they did not agree with us, they did think about the issues and possible debate them, and we will continue to educate. I will send separate emails to each college President and WACCT Trustees.