

Summary of bills of interest in the 2021 Wyoming Legislature as of April 5, 2021

Bill status is provided in blue italic text. Dead bill titles are in red text.

THE BUDGET

Gov. Mark Gordon signed the 2021 supplemental budget bill on April 1, with a few line item vetoes. The Legislature meets Tuesday and Wednesday and could take up a veto override attempt, but it is unlikely the vetoes rise to that urgency with the work that needs to be done by noon April 7. In seven short months, Gov. Gordon will present his standard budget recommendations for the 2022 budget session. Find the veto letter here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OpHhNPXvWt_GJO4sMiochzcum4jAj_sX/view.

GOVERNMENT

HB158 Local land use planning and zoning – Rep. Steve Harshman, R-Casper

This would give primacy to enacted zoning regulations – over land use plans -- as local governments make decisions. If plans and regulations conflict, the regulations win. Sponsors include several House and Senate committee chairmen. *Senate passed 26-6 (2 excused). Ready for House concurrence.*

HB36 Management Council Membership – Rep. Dan Laursen (R-Powell)

Would tie political diversity requirements to the percentage of a minority party in the Legislature (30 percent). Management Council will be smaller and have fewer minority party requirements. Listen to Senate Rules Committee debate for discouraging experience on April 2, 2021. *Senate passed 27-2-1. To House for concurrence.*

SF147 Management Council authority and legislative committees – Sen. Larry Hicks, R-Baggs
Standing committees would pick their own interim studies, although the Management Council could limit the number and assign studies of their own, and committees would need permission to expand meeting days. *Missed introduction deadline in House. .*

SF80 Public health orders-local and legislative oversight – Sen. Troy McKeown, R-Gillette
Would submit emergency health orders to a 48-hour public comment period and allow a county to opt out. Would limit state orders to 30 days without legislative permission. District, county or municipal orders would be limited to 15 days and would require. *Missed introduction deadline in House.*

HB109 Local health officers-educational requirements – Rep. Hans Hunt, R-Newcastle

In another move by legislators to regulate health officials, this bill would require health officers appointed by local health departments to be medical doctors or nurse practitioners. The bill further says the officers “shall assist the state department of health in carrying out the provisions of all health and sanitary laws and regulations of the state.” *HEA 38.*

HB127 Public Health Amendments – Speaker Eric Barlow, R-Gillette

The limits proposed in this bill would require governing officials (county, municipal, health district, governor) to approve preventive, restrictive orders by health officials beyond 10 days.

The governor would appoint (and could dismiss) the state health officer. Lays out process to block assiduous health orders, by action of a special session of the Legislature (based on the dubious scientific credentials of lawmakers). *Senate approved 19-10-1, returned to House for concurrence.*

SF16 Net Metering – Joint Corporations

Would overhaul Wyoming's laws for rooftop solar and backyard wind by repealing the current statutes for net-metering, which involves payback for customer-generated energy. SF16 would eliminate the guarantee that customers could hook up their solar system to the grid and receive "credit" for the power they generate. It also tells the Public Service Commission to establish an "appropriate system" to regulate rates, terms and conditions of customer-generators by electric utilities. *Died in House Corporations.*

SF19 Public health emergencies-immunity amendments – Joint Judiciary

Would extend civil liability immunity to persons or entities who were complying with health orders, during a declared public health emergency. This immunity is much more narrowly drawn than the "free pass" proposed in the House bill by Rep. Laursen. *House Enrolled Act 57.*

HB7 Air ambulance membership organizations-regulations – Joint Minerals

Defines and regulates groups that sell "memberships" to people and businesses and counties to provide a cut-rate for air ambulance services. Emphasis on consumer information that this is NOT insurance, and you are stuck with a huge bill if the ambulance service you get isn't the one you have a membership with. *House Enrolled Act 75.*

SF67 Repeal gun free zones and preemption amendments – Sen. Ogden Driskill

Would repeal gun free zones, provide for carrying concealed weapons and "clarify" that only the state Legislature may regulate firearms. Senate rejected an amendment to let school boards permit guns or not. *House Education rejected 5-4.*

SF81 Second Amendment Preservation Act– Sen. Anthony Bouchard, R-Cheyenne

Would invalidate federal restrictions on gun ownership, citing the 10th Amendment. amended extensively, and supporters withdrew. Heavily amended to point the sponsors voted against it on final Senate passage. Missed deadline for introduction in House.

EDUCATION

HB173 School Finance Funding-2 –Substitute 1 House Education Committee

This was rewritten right up to the final minute on third reading in the House, but it seems to be both constitutional and to include all the elements of cuts, revenue shifts and taxes to be acceptable to a wide range of legislators and school districts. It also brings into statute the funding model that has existed in session laws. Senate deleted provisional tax, tried to dictate teacher salaries/numbers. *Passed Senate on Friday 22-5-3, headed to concurrence vote in House and near certain joint conference committee.*

SF130 Charter schools – Sen. Ogden Driskill, R-Sundance

This would let people who want to open a state-funded charter school go to the State Loan and Investment Board for approval. Sponsors think it will welcome for-profit charter schools to set

up in unpopular settings, without the support of local school districts. House inserted a study period with local elections and drastically cut funding for virtual charter schools. *Passed House 44-12-4, Senate rejected concurrence and sent to a conference committee. Senate appointed conferees who all voted “yes” on its version.*

SF143 School finance-funding model amendments – Sen. Charles Scott, R-Casper
Sen. Scott and four other legislators have written their own school funding cuts, based on their inherent wisdom and judgment (no consultants). Among their ideas: fund not-quite-all of transportation and special education, enforce district consolidation on a county basis and remove benefits for groundskeepers. Will collide head-on with the House school funding version, HB173. Alternate school financing bill that dictates specific and devastating cuts. *Missed deadline for introduction in House.*

SF83 Gillette college community college district – Sen. Jeff Wasserburger, R-Gillette
The Wyoming Community College Commission has approved an application by the Campbell County Commission to create a college district. With this bill, the Legislature would approve the formation and put it on the ballot for approval of the district and at least 4 mills property tax. The bill was amended to better define the transition of programs and students from Northern Wyoming to Gillette College. *Passed House 46-14, signed as House Enrolled Act 47.*

ELECTIONS

HB163 Federal congressional elections-residency – Rep. Joe MacGuire, R-Casper
Would prevent candidates for U.S. House or Senate from Wyoming to claim residence in any other state. Closes a loophole that allows candidates to live anywhere. *Senate passed 28-0-2, sent to House for concurrence..*

HB75 Voter ID – Rep. Chuck Gray (plus 40 other reps and 15 senators)
Once again attacking a problem that doesn’t exist, this bill would require presentation of a state-issued or tribal ID at the polls. Watered down so it’s unclear it is anything more than Election Day hassle. But it’s on everyone’s checklist. Apparently. For no good reason that anyone could provide. *House passed 51-8-1. House Enrolled Act 72.*

HB187 Elected official residency requirement – Rep. Hans Hunt, R-Newcastle
Would require county elected officials to live in that county. *Senate passed 27-1-2. House Enrolled Act 79.*

SF138 School board trustees-party affiliation – Sen. Affie Ellis, R-Cheyenne
Original bill would let trustee candidates list their political party affiliation on the ballot. Trustee is a nonpartisan office. Senate amended to make the listing mandatory. Sponsor says it will help voters. It also will be handy to enforce party discipline. *Missed introduction deadline in House.*

TAXATION AND REVENUE

SF119 Investment of state permanent funds – Joint Appropriations
Staying within the risk profile of a reference portfolio, this would allow the state to invest permanent funds 70 percent in global equities and 30 percent in domestic fixed income investments. Considered a “more modern view” of portfolio theory. Benchmarks would be set by

the State Loan and Investment Board (top 5 elected). *House passed 56-4. House Enrolled Act 18. (One of those remarkable bills that pass without any amendments.)*

SF73 Tolling authority for I-80 – Sen. Cale Case, R-Lander

Would create a highway tolling program “to finance, construct, operate and maintain Interstate 80 and accommodate the needs of the traveling public through safe, efficient, convenient and modern vehicular traffic.” The bill would authorize the Wyoming Transportation Commission to create and supervise a tolling program in the Department of Transportation (include setting rates). Development of a master plan would cost an estimated \$1 million to \$1.25 million, according to the fiscal note. *Squeaked through Senate, died in House Transportation.*

HEALTH

HB162 Medical treatment opportunity act – Rep. John Romero-Martinez, R-Cheyenne

This bill has been amended in committee (if the full House accepts it) to strip it down to a simple expansion of Medicaid to include some 24,000 low-wage, uninsured adults in Wyoming. It now looks like the clean Senate version, SF154. *Senate Labor killed 2-3 after a heartbreaking 3 hours of testimony. Worth listening to.*

SF52 Insurance-mental health and substance use parity – Joint Labor

Would ensure equal treatment by health insurance plans for mental health and substance abuse claims as for other health coverage. *Senate concurred 30-0, Senate Enrolled Act 45.*

HB217 Community health center and rural health clinic grants – Rep. Sue Wilson, R-Cheyenne

Would add equipment and eliminate the sunset date on a Department of Health program to accept grants for health centers and rural clinics. *Senate passed 29-0-1, House Enrolled Act 44.*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND COURTS

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

SJ4 School capital Construction-constitutional amendment – Sen. Charles Scott, R-Casper

Would amend the Wyoming Constitution to move responsibility for scoring and funding school facilities from the state to school districts. Sponsors contend local voters will know better how, where and when to build schools. Replaces state politics with local politics. *House education killed 7-2..*

HJ3 State lands mineral royalties – Rep. Tim Hallinan, R-Gillette

Would amend the Wyoming Constitution to let the Legislature take 2/3 of the mineral income from school trust lands and put it in a spending account for six years. *Missed General File cutoff in Senate.*

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