

WYOMING TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

ACTION ALERT



Legislative Summary – Week Six – Monday February 23, 2009

Week six concluded with the budget bill still waiting for conference committee. Negotiations between the House and the Senate were projected to begin today, Monday the 23rd; however outcome from the Federal stimulus package is still uncertain. Policy leaders would like to know more about Wyoming's benefits from the package as much as possible before the budget bill is finalized. WTA will be there to cover budget negotiations and will summarize accordingly.

News for property tax this week – the Senate Revenue Committee will hear HB 234 – Property Tax Assessed Value – on Tuesday. As you know, WTA has taken a position of strong opposition to this bill. Any type of property assessment caps or limitations can have serious consequences to Wyoming's over all tax system. To date, the field of supporters is slim; however it is politically popular with legislators. If anyone is interested in more information about this bill please contact Erin immediately.

Thursday is the last day for bills to be reported out of the second house and Friday is the last day for bills to get off committee of the whole in the second house. ***WTA will approach the chairmen from the Joint Revenue Committee to discuss potential interim topics this week and next. If any members have an issue of particular interest, please plan to attend the weekly policy meeting today for discussion.***

BILLS OF INTEREST THIS WEEK

HB 67 – Tobacco Excise Tax - Provides that moist snuff tobacco will be taxed based upon net weight. And for anything up to 1 oz. an excise tax at the rate of \$.60. Anticipated increase in revenue \$819,000 yearly. **Passed the Senate on 2/18 by a vote of 21-9. Enrolled Act No. 15.**

HB 68 – Property Tax – Homestead Exemption – Joint Revenue Committee - Homestead property tax exemption of \$4,400 of assessed value on owner-occupied primary dwellings for homeowners who currently live in Wyoming. Appropriation of \$40.2 M. Amended in Committee to say that the person owes the lesser of \$4,400 of assessed value on the dwelling or 50% of the tax assessed. The 3 year residency requirement was also take off. **The bill passed the House by a vote of 54-5-1, Senate Revenue by a vote of 3-2, and has been re-referred to Senate Appropriations. WTA supports this bill over any other change in assessment or limitation type bill.**

HB 138 – Property Tax Refund Program – Madden, Anderson, Landon, Teeters, and Schiffer - Amends the Property Tax Refund Program so that property taxes must be paid timely, changes the income requirement from 2/3 the median gross household income to 3/4, extends the total household assets from \$50,000 to \$100,000 per adult member, Includes all IRA's as exempt, adds medical savings accounts and allows veterans to apply for both programs by repealing the double dipping provision.. Fiscal note estimates that an increase of 10% per year or 1,850 applicants. Should yield \$72,000 in 2010, \$79,000 in 2011, and \$87,000 in 2012 in increased property tax refunds. **Passed third reading in the House 1/27, and the Senate 27-2-1 on 2/20. The bill now goes back to the House for concurrence. The Senate added an amendment that says property taxes must be paid timely "with any applicable interest and penalties". WTA supports this bill.**

HB 144 – Transparency in Government - . Creates a Wyoming public finance website, establishes a select committee on technology, requires a report and provides for an appropriation of \$28,000 from the GF to LSO for the meetings of the select committee on technology. Appropriation of \$12,300 from the GF to A&I for creating the searchable website. **Passed the House on February 10th by a vote of 57-1-2, and Senate Appropriations – is now on Senate General File.**

HB 145 – Rural health care districts – mill levy - Increases the authorized mill levies for rural health care districts from 2 mills or 4 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation if approved by the board of trustees and the board of county commissioners. **Passed third reading in the House Friday. Was amended on the House floor to say that if**

the board of trustees votes to increase the mill levy beyond the 2 mills, the county commissioners shall call an election to have a vote of the people approve the increase in mills. Passed the House and is one 3rd reading in the Senate today. WTA will ask the Management Council for an interim study on special districts.

HB 215 – Tax exemption for renewable resources - Passed the House and Senate Revenue. Now on Senate General File.

HB 221 – Property tax appeals – 2 – Throne bill. Provides that the taxpayer may present any credible evidence, to rebut the presumption in favor of a valuation asserted by DOR. **Passed House and Senate.**

HB 234 – Property tax – assessed value - Exempts the assessed value of all other property that exceeds the previous 3 year average. Appropriates \$23.9 M from the GF. Loss to the SFP in 2010 is estimated to be \$5.3 M, \$3.4 M in 2011, and \$3.6 M in 2012. Impacts to locals would be approximately \$15.5 M in 2011 and \$16.3 M in 2012. Amended in the House to take away the 3 year residency requirement. Passed the House by a vote of 38-22 and will be heard in Senate Revenue tomorrow. *WTA opposes this bill.*

HB 244 – Uncompensated trauma care - 1 cent gasoline and diesel fuel tax on all fuel sold on and off highway to the State Highway Fund, and severance tax revenue swap with the Department of Health for the Trauma Care Fund. Amended to exempt off road. Passed the House by a vote of 46-13-1 on February 11th, and will be heard in Senate Revenue Tuesday 2/24.

HB 283 – Taxation and revenue – digital products – Provides for a definition for specific digital products. Passed the House on February 11th by a vote of 59-0-1 and Senate Revenue by a vote of 4-0.

HB 287 – Helium – property tax – creates an ad valorem tax on the value of the gross product produced. Passed the House by a vote of 47-12-1 on February 11th, and Senate Revenue 5-0. Is on second reading in the Senate today, 2/23.

SF 144 – Property tax assessment rules – Makes the Department of Revenue promulgate rules and regulations to ensure that the county assessors follow statistical quality and fairness of assessed values of residential properties. Passed the Senate and House Revenue.

WTA MEMBERS, PLEASE NOTE – WTA WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE POLICY MEETINGS EVERY MONDAY OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WHERE: 2120 CAREY AVE., CHEYENNE, 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

WHEN: 2:00 PM

WHY: TO DISCUSS TIMELY LEGISLATIVE POLICY ISSUES, SUMMARY OF BILLS, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WTA POLICY DIRECTION.

ALL WTA MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION - Tentative schedule
(37 day schedule – Recess on President's Day)

Day 1 Tuesday, January 13

Session convenes.

Day 12 Wednesday, January 28

Last day for Senate Files to be submitted to LSO for introduction. (noon)

Day 15 Monday, February 2

Last day for House Bills to be submitted to LSO for introduction. (noon)

WYOMING'S LEADING TAX POLICY AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATION SINCE 1937.

Day 19 Friday, February 6	Last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in house of origin.
Day 20 Monday, February 9	Last day for Committee of the Whole in house of origin.
Day 21 Tuesday, February 10	Last day for Second Reading in house of origin.
Day 22 Wednesday, February 11	Last day for Third Reading on Bills in house of origin.
Monday, February 16	President's Day Recess
Day 32 Thursday, February 26	Last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in second house.
Day 33 Friday, February 27	Last day for Committee of the Whole on bills in the second house.
Day 34 Monday, March 2	Last day for Second Reading on bills in the second house.
Day 35 Tuesday, March 3	Last day for Third Reading on bills in the second house.
Day 36 Wednesday, March 4	Concurrence on Amendments/Joint Conference Committee Reports.
Day 37 Thursday, March 5	Joint Conference Committee Reports; All JCC Reports due to Front Desk by 2:00 p.m. <u>ADJOURN</u> by Midnight.
Friday, Monday, and Tuesday - March 6, 9 and 10 are available if necessary.	