

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on February 13, the second day of the 2024 Budget Session.

Today, we continued with introductory votes in the House. We heard several property tax bills that would provide relief from skyrocketing taxes.

While Wyoming has some of the lowest residential property taxes in the country, increases in property values have made challenged many homeowners' ability to pay the resulting higher tax. Higher residential property taxes have been particularly burdensome for older people on fixed incomes. The following residential property tax relief bills passed today with my support: [HB0045](#) - Property tax exemption-residential structures; [HB0052](#) - Property tax-homestead exemption; [HB0103](#) - Property tax-assessment ratio for residential property; [HB0127](#) - Property tax exemption-specified real property; [HB0133](#) - Property tax-holiday; and [HB0134](#) - Property tax deferral program-amendments. I have voted for every property tax relief bill on introduction this session. The Revenue Committee will work the bills and bring solutions for property tax relief to the floor.

HB45 is a property tax exemption that would cap property value increases at no more than a 5% per year. A person's property value may increase by less than 5% or may decrease. If a person's property valuation decreases, that would set a new baseline. This exemption could be made available to Wyoming residential property owners in 2024.

HB52 - Property tax-homestead exemption is my bill. It provides time-limited property tax relief, exempting the first \$50,000 of fair market value for those under 64, a \$100,000 exemption for those 65 to 74 years old, and a \$150,000 exemption of fair market value for those over the age of 75. My bill is designed to provide tax relief for every homeowner, but provides more relief for older homeowners. HB52 utilizes state dollars to reimburse local government for the lost revenue.

Another bill that passed the two-thirds introductory vote with my support was [HB0071](#) - Broadband development subaccount-amendments, which provides the matching funds required

to receive federal funds under federal broadband programs. This will help rural Wyomingites get - or stay - connected to high-speed internet, allowing individuals to access services as well as each other, and allowing our businesses to do business anywhere in the world. I have worked to improve broadband in Sublette County for a decade.

A bill that did not make the two-thirds introduction that I supported was [HB84](#), the High Plains Research Station and Arboretum-historic site. The bill would have designated the Arboretum outside Cheyenne as a historic site and required the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources to manage the site for the preservation of history and enhanced availability to the public. This site is one of the most important agricultural historic sites in Wyoming, and I hope we can continue to work towards making it a State Historic Site.

I can be reached at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com) with questions or comments.