

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on March 1, the fifteenth day of the 2024 Budget Session.

Today marked the end of the third week of session. We have one week left to finish hearing and working bills including the budget. We heard the following bills on Second Reading:

[SF32](#) aims to uphold transparency and integrity in hemp production by prohibiting the addition of synthetic substances to hemp products and restricting the sale of hemp with THC or psychoactive substances beyond specified limits. Notably, the bill emphasizes the importance of compliance to maintain legality and prevent hemp from falling under controlled substance regulations. In January, I went to a Pinedale Town Council meeting that featured a presentation on the danger of THC products like Delta-8 and other derivatives which will be outlawed by this bill. It was clear these concentrated THC products are in our Sublette County schools and they are harmful to children's brains. I sponsored a bill last session to stop the sale of these products to minors, but the language in that bill did not stop the sale of these products. This bill will, and I support it.

[SF44](#) amends requirements for limited mining operations to include any mining of noncoal mineral not regulated by the nuclear regulatory commission. It requires an increase in bonding amount and changes the requirements of what should be contained in annual reports. I do not support the current form of this bill because it could have significant consequences to small gravel operations. An amendment grandfathers in existing gravel pits, which makes the bill more palatable.

[SF79](#) gives an opportunity to a micro brewer who is producing 25,000 barrels or less to be released from a franchise agreement that also includes a buyout clause. The bill also outlines arbitration rules if the parties cannot reach an agreement. Microbreweries continue to multiply in Wyoming, and we want them to be able to grow their businesses without being penalized for doing so.

Last week, Senator Fred Baldwin, who represents Sublette County in Senate District 14, announced he was not running for re-election in the upcoming election cycle. Senator Baldwin has done an admirable job in the Legislature, and his work on the Labor/Health Committee has been extraordinary. His exit will leave an open seat in the Senate. I am considering running for his Senate seat, but have not made a final decision at this time. Regardless, I will not run again for House District 20, because I want to honor the tradition that the Speaker of the House should retire from the House after serving one term as Speaker. I believe that this tradition is good for democracy. Wyoming may be one of the only states with this tradition. I will decide after this budget session whether to run for the Senate.

Next week the House will finish working Senate Files, and hopefully we will have a budget to vote on. The House and the Senate are currently far from agreeing on the budget. I can be reached at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com) with questions or comments.