

Week two started with the January update to the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG) report where lawmakers learned that the state has slightly more revenue coming in than previously thought. Natural gas and coal have both seen increases in price and production, which means we will see approximately \$900,000 in additional funds to pay for government. While this is good news, it is important to understand that the state is still under water for the two-year biennium by \$156 million. There are several tax bills introduced so far, ranging from decreasing severance taxes on coal to increasing cigarette and alcohol taxes, increasing the generation tax on wind, and several dealing with property taxes.

We have two deadlines approaching:

- Wednesday, January 25 Last day for Senate Files to be submitted to LSO for introduction. (noon)
- Monday, January 30 Last day for House Bills to be submitted to LSO for introduction. (noon)

The Joint Appropriations Committee finished marking up the budget and approved the Governor's recommendations for the Wyoming Community College Commission, adding back in \$600,000 for the Veteran's Tuition Waiver program. In the Capitol Construction Department budget, the JAC also authorized colleges to spend their own money for proposed projects for EWC, LCCC, and added projects for CWC and NWCCD. Also, the \$2.5 million for the Governor's ENDOW initiative were supported out of the budget of the Wyoming Business Council.

Members of the JAC is also discussed the effects another 1-2% across the board cuts to all agencies except the Department of Health. Those of us who never leave the "Emerald City" as the Jonah Financial Center is called, have heard we may see a bill that once again reduces the retirement and health matching contributions for state employees.

## BILLS OF INTEREST THIS WEEK

**WACCT testified on several bills this week:**

- [HB 55 – Spending policy amendments -2](#) – this bill impacts how the Excellence in Higher Education Funds operate - both UW and WACCT described to the committee how the institutions utilize the funds from this fund. We also drafted a fact sheet for the House Appropriations member to supplement the data produced by the WCCC.
- [HB 133 – Civics proficiency examination](#) – Dr. Leach testified some of the concerns the colleges have with the requirements in this bill.
- [HB77 – In-state tuition – AmeriCorps service](#) – Dr. Hicswa testified to how the program works for the colleges.

[Please see the WACCT 2017 Bill Tracking](#) for more bills. We have several bills of concern, namely, HB 136 – Campus Carry and HB 137 – Wyoming repeal gun free zones act.

## IN THE NEWS

[House bill would reduce tax rate on coal, cost state millions in revenue](#) – 1/21/17 - Casper Star Tribune

## **KEY EVENTS OF THE 2017 SESSION:**

(37-day schedule – Recess Friday & Monday for President's Day)

- Day 1 Tuesday, January 10 Session convenes.
- Day 12 Wednesday, January 25 Last day for Senate Files to be submitted to LSO for introduction. (noon)
- Day 15 Monday, January 30 Last day for House Bills to be submitted to LSO for introduction. (noon)
- Day 18 Thursday, February 2 Last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in house of origin.
- Day 19 Friday, February 3 Last day for Committee of the Whole in house of origin.
- Day 20 Monday, February 6 Last day for Second Reading in house of origin.
- Day 21 Tuesday, February 7 Last day for Third Reading on Bills in house of origin.
- Friday, February 17 & Monday, February 20 President's Day Recess
- Day 32 Friday, February 24 Last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in second house.
- Day 33 Monday, February 27 Last day for Committee of the Whole in the second house.
- Day 34 Tuesday, February 28 Last day for Second Reading in the second house.
- Day 35 Wednesday, March 1 Last day for Third Reading in the second house.
- Day 36 Thursday, March 2 Concurrence on Amendments/Joint Conference Committee Reports.
- Day 37 Friday, March 3 Joint Conference Committee Reports; All JCC Reports due to Front Desk by 2:00 p.m.;
- ADJOURN by Midnight.
- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday - March 6, 7 and 8 are available if necessary.