The Joint Revenue Committee met last week to discuss three bills - Highway Funding, Mineral Audit Period, and Tax Zapping. Below is WTA's summary of the meeting:

**Highway Funding:**
The draft bill proposed three funding mechanisms to increase funding to Wyoming's highways. 1) increasing vehicle registration fees; 2) increasing the fuel tax; and 3) impose a sales tax on fuel. After considerable discussion, the committee passed 2 components to the bill with a third that will likely be added at a later meeting.

**For Registration Fees:** the committee bumped all the fees in sections 31-3-101 (a) (ii) (A-D) to $25.00. For section (E) (I) fees increased to $10 and the rest doubled from the current amounts. WYDOT estimated that these changes would yield approximately $4M annually; however, we are waiting on firm numbers from WYDOT. The state portion of Wyoming's vehicle registration fees have not been increased since 1974. *Please keep in mind that this portion of your vehicle registration is not tied to the value of your vehicle, and therefore, your total due will not actually double.*

**Fuel Tax:** the Committee opted to increase Wyoming's current total fuel tax of $.14/gallon for both fuel and diesel to a full $.24, effective all at one time starting in 2013. This increase would yield approximately $71.8M annually.

The sales tax on fuel component was declined by the Committee. The draft bill passed unanimously.

Therefore, even with the two components listed above moving forward, WYDOT still needs $135M/year and that gap must be filled. The Committee asked LSO to put numbers together regarding a severance tax diversion. This element will likely be considered at the next Joint Meeting and would need to generate approximately $59.2M annually.

The Revenue Committee will likely try to schedule a meeting with the Joint Transportation Committee again later in the year. Senate Chairman Schiffer told the Committee that Joint Transportation will take a look at the draft bill when they meet in September and mark up their version. In the meantime, WTA will be working to "get the word out" on highway funding and educate Wyoming citizens on the need to move this important bill forward.

**Minerals Audit Period:** The Wyoming Mining Association testified to the fact that interested parties are still working the details out with this bill. Recall, the issue initially began with an effort to implement an industry factor for coal. Given the political reality of that idea not passing, the bill morphed into an effort to improve the mineral audit process. However, the bill as presented to the Committee was one neither the Governor's office or industry could get behind. The parties involved will continue to work the next year to improve the bill.

**Tax Zapping:**
The Wyoming Department of Revenue and Department of Audit brought an issue to the Joint Committee that is making waves across the nation. States are making it illegal to access what are called "automated sales suppression devises" for purposes of falsifying electronic records of an electronic cash register or other point of sale system - basically, falsifying sales tax reporting. The Committee passed the bill as presented, adding an amendment to include jail time in addition to fines for enforcement. The bill passed 11-2.

**Next meeting:**
Acting House Chairman Representative Mike Madden made mention that the Committee will have more information on the special district effort - probably something along the lines of a central collection point for those districts that are taxation districts vs. fee districts. All budgets could be posted on a central website, for example. WTA will work with Representative Madden and the Department of Audit to keep on top of this effort.
WTA Reception
Thank you to everyone who attended WTA’s joint interim committee reception! The event was a great success, held on a beautiful summer evening in Casper! Please join us in thanking our event sponsors:

- Anadarko
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