

News Release



WYOMING SENATE DISTRICT 3

WYOMING HOUSE AND SENATE REPUBLICANS INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO PROTECT STATE'S COAL INDUSTRY, ELECTRICAL GRID RELIABILITY FROM DISCRIMINATORY INTERSTATE POLICIES "BECAUSE RELIABILITY SAVES LIVES"

(Cheyenne, WY) – Wyoming lawmakers introduced legislation this week that would allocate funding to protect the state's coal industry and reliability of its electrical grid against discriminatory interstate policies. House Bill 207 would provide \$1.2 million to the Office of the Governor to prosecute state governments that impede Wyoming's ability to export coal and coal-fire electricity.

"The recent energy crisis in Texas, which caused more than 70 deaths and left millions of people without power, underscores the importance of grid reliability," said Representative Jeremy Haroldson (R-HD04), who introduced the legislation. "If other states are allowed to shut out Wyoming's electricity exports, it could force our plants to shut down. When that happens, we will see similar outages and higher costs on consumers."

"Clean, reliable energy that is produced in Wyoming plants is a win-win for both consumers and the state of Wyoming particularly in funding k-12 education," said Senator Cheri Stinmetz (R-SD03).

"Having reliable, dispatchable power is an integral part of a successful all-of-the-above energy policy. This policy is an important step forward to ensure that remains the case for the foreseeable future," said Senator Brian Boner (R-SD2).

"We have seen a spike in states trying to block Wyoming's access to consumer markets to advance their political agenda," said Haroldson. "That is a violation of the Constitution, which prohibits states from discriminating against interstate commerce. House Bill 207 provides the resources for Wyoming to hold those governments accountable and ensure our energy products can reach consumers—which is critical to the dependability of our electrical grid." Jeremy went on to say that, "Reliability saves lives. It's that simple. It is time we start truly caring about the future."

Wyoming is the largest and most efficient producer of coal in the United States, accounting for nearly 40 percent of domestic production. More than 91 percent of coal mined in Wyoming is shipped out of state and overseas. Coal production contributes to Wyoming's

status as a net-exporter of electricity, most of which is generated by coal-fired power plants.

Wyoming exports about two-thirds of the electricity it produces to surrounding states. About 80 percent of that power is generated by coal-fired plants. Interstate demand is critical to the continued operations of the state's power plants and, by extension, to the reliability of Wyoming's electrical grid. Some states, like Colorado, have implemented regulation that could prevent utilities from importing Wyoming's coal-fired electricity.

Washington State recently used the Clean Water Act to stop a proposed coal export facility that would have exported Wyoming-produced coal overseas. 2019 Colorado legislation HB1261 and SB0236 placed unconstitutional requirements upon the state of Wyoming due to our shared power cooperative. The Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from discriminating against interstate commerce.

"We simply can't have one state interfering with another's access to markets by using the Clean Water Act or any other regulation as a weapon to pursue a misguided political agenda," Governor Mark Gordon said in January during his address to the Wyoming Legislature. "It's the principle of state's rights and access to markets that is at stake."

House Bill 207, Coal Fired Generation Facility Closures-Litigation Funding, was introduced in the Wyoming House of Representatives on Tuesday. It is co-sponsored by Representatives Andrew, Barlow, Bear, Blackburn, Clausen, Crago, Duncan, Fortner, Gray, Greear, Hallinan, Hunt, Jennings, Knapp, Laursen, Neiman, Ottman, Rodriguez-Williams, Romero-Martinez, Sommers, Western and Winter and Senators Baldwin, Biteman, Boner, Dockstader, Driskill, French, Hicks, Hutchings, Kolb, Kost, Landen, Pappas, Schuler, Steinmetz and Wasserburger.

"Coal is one of Wyoming's largest economic drivers," said Haroldson. "Especially as our state faces mounting budget deficits and hostile federal policies, we cannot allow other states to punish our energy producers and threaten the reliability of Wyoming's electricity to achieve short-sighted political 'wins.'

It is time that we stopped sacrificing the future reliability of our state and even the nation's electricity, as we have seen lives are at stake."

About Senator Cheri Steinmetz:

Senator Steinmetz represents Goshen, Niobrara, and Weston counties. She is a member of the Appropriations Committee and previously served on the following Senate committees: Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources; Transportation, Highways, & Military Affairs; and the Select Committee on Legislative Facilities, Technology and Process. She began serving in the Wyoming State Senate in 2019. Previously, Senator Steinmetz represented House District 5 from 2015 to 2018.