

Cattle out. We rode and watched these cattle and kept them located. We kept the country pretty well covered because we had a couple unpleasant neighbors who had been picked up for rustling. We had to keep pretty close watch on our cattle and horses both."

- Amy Chubb from *Cowgirls: Women of the American West*

Submitted for the Legislative Session - February 2022

Mark Gordon, Governor

November 15, 2021

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET MESSAGE

To the Members of the 66th Legislature:

With this letter, I am fulfilling my constitutional duty to submit a balanced budget proposal for the 2023-24 biennium. While Wyoming has seen an uptick in revenues over the last few months and hopes to see more in the year ahead, I remain concerned about the long-term sustainability of Wyoming's revenue sources. Therefore, I am proposing a frugal budget with the hope that we can save more than \$400 million in additional revenues that can help to avoid having to make the kinds of draconian cuts we were compelled to last year. I am also proposing a few strategic investments with the goal of providing necessary services more efficiently.

Elsie Lloyd and her sister Amy were my neighbors growing up. They were remarkable women who had come into Wyoming in the 1900s. They lived through good times and bad. They remembered the devastation of grasshoppers in the 1930s and some fine years as well. I knew them for their practical ways, excellent horsesense, and love of fishing. They embodied a toughness and an enterprise that are hallmarks of what we in Wyoming cherish: decency, thrift, and independence. They

biennium. Wyoming's core industries and largest revenue generators continue to be energy and minerals – all of which remain under attack by an administration in Washington bent on eliminating fossil fuels from our nation's energy portfolio. Fortunately though, 2021 saw price increases for coal, oil and natural gas; albeit only after prices hit rock bottom a year ago. Commodity economies are always volatile, so while recently prices have been notably high, the next few years are forecast to see declines in production and demand for fossil energy. These factors may well undermine more optimistic revenue projections.

Today's good fortune is a reprieve, not a solution to our revenue stability. Policies from around the world and, more pointedly, from Washington D.C. are targeting the fossil fuel industry especially in Western federal lands states. These policies will have an effect on future revenues. New technologies may offer some relief in the fullness of time, but it will take time and commitment to deploy them widely. Consequently, for the near term, we will be obliged to contend with antagonistic federal policies and agencies and must budget accordingly. Nevertheless, I believe this budget appropriately