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**WY Legislature Passes ENDOW Bills to Diversify Economy**  
*Legislative Package Will Expand Air Service, Improve Broadband, Provide Workforce Training, Support Blockchain & Virtual Currency & Encourage Entrepreneurialism and Innovation*

**Cheyenne, Wyoming** – The Wyoming Senate and House of Representatives gave its final approval this week to a series of legislation in support of ENDOW (Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming), a 20-year initiative to make lasting and meaningful gains in diversifying and growing Wyoming's economy.

"I am pleased with the legislative work on ENDOW this session," said Wyoming Governor Matt Mead. "The passage of these bills makes it clear the Legislature sees the importance to take action on recommendations the ENDOW Executive Council made in its December report. I appreciate the work of the Legislature and the Executive Council. This work provides the impetus needed to move ENDOW forward."

Last year, Governor Matt Mead worked with the legislature to pass a bill authorizing ENDOW. The ENDOW Executive Council recently released ten preliminary recommendations to address barriers to, and opportunities for, economic diversification. Members of the legislature worked together to craft legislation, reflective of these recommendations, to address air service, broadband connectivity, workforce training, blockchain technology, computer science education, entrepreneurial opportunities and international marketing of Wyoming products.

"The message from the legislature is loud and clear: Wyoming is open for business," said Senate President Eli Bebout. "ENDOW is an important vehicle for working collaboratively with the private sector to bring forward recommendations that support a diverse and thriving economy. It's essential that Wyoming has the policies and infrastructure in place that will help develop new business sectors while supporting existing ones."

"The Wyoming Legislature has worked tirelessly to bring the ENDOW initiative to fruition. We are totally committed to diversifying Wyoming's economy. There is no question Wyoming's people are our greatest resource," said House Speaker Steve Harshman.

“This work that has created ENDOW has given us the opportunity to invest in this resource – our people – while creating a pathway for new industries to thrive.”

House and Senate leadership both reiterated their commitment to working with the Governor and the Executive Council in the interim to ensure that ENDOW generates measurable results for the people of Wyoming.

Among the measures passed was legislation to help grow and expand air service across Wyoming while driving down costs to taxpayers. *Senate File 40, Commercial air service improvement*, would support the Wyoming Department of Transportation's (WYDOT) 10-year Commercial Air Service Plan (CASP) to create a reliable and affordable option for air service in Wyoming. CASP would enable the WYDOT Aeronautics Division to contract with one airline to provide commercial air service to a major hub airport, such as Denver or Salt Lake City. Local communities and the state would be able to determine the fares, flight times and potentially share in the profits.

“The Wyoming Legislature has been an incredible partner for ENDOW and a great champion for making lasting and meaningful gains in diversifying Wyoming's economy,” said ENDOW Co-Chair Greg Hill. “The package of bills passed this session help eliminate some of the barriers to attracting business and set the stage for new industries to take root and flourish right here in Wyoming.”

To ensure Wyoming citizens have the skills they need to meet the workforce needs of existing and emerging industries, ENDOW recommended and legislative leadership championed a bill to provide a sustainable source of workforce training funds to target long-term economic diversification successes. *Senate File 119, Workforce development-priority economic sector program* will establish a dedicated fund for workforce training in priority economic sectors.

Other ENDOW measures passed by the legislature include:

- *Senate File 29, Education-computer science and computational thinking*, will add computer science to the state educational program – making Wyoming the first state in the country to require its schools to offer computer science education.
- *Senate File 100, Economic diversification-broadband services*, will establish a broadband coordinator position, a broadband advisory council and a Wyoming broadband grant fund to help ensure every community in Wyoming has the opportunity to connect with the world through reliable high-speed internet.
- *Senate File 118, Kickstart Wyoming-economic diversification*, will build out Wyoming's entrepreneurial network by establishing a dedicated organization to provide capital access funds for startups.
- *Senate File 108, Economic diversification and development*, will expand the state's agriculture marketing program and provide for an international trade representative to promote and sell Wyoming products.
- *House Bill 70, Open Blockchain Tokens Exemptions, House Bill 101, Electronic Corporate Records, House Bill 126, Limited Liability Companies-Series*, and *House Bill 19, Wyoming Money Transmitter Act-virtual currency exemption* and *Senate File 111, Property taxation-digital currencies* will all help drive a new industry here

in Wyoming – virtual currencies and blockchain technology – positioning Wyoming to be a national leader in this growing field.

The ENDOW Executive Council is scheduled to meet in Jackson on March 21 at the Snow King Grand View Ballroom from 4-6 p.m. The Executive Council will be finalizing the House of ENDOW template to better explain the process of the initiative; receive reports from the five economic engine subcommittees; and discuss next steps in advance of their May public meeting slated for May 10-11, 2018 in Riverton and Lander.

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