

**Bill No.:** SF1002 **Effective:** **Immediately**

**LSO No.:** 20LSO-710

**Enrolled Act No.:** SEA No. 0002

**Chapter No.:** [Chapter Number\_RO]

**Prime Sponsor:** Management Council

**Catch Title:** Emergency powers-Covid-19-2

**Subject: Emergency aid and emergency procedures**

**Summary/Major Elements:**

- This bill amends existing law to establish that, for the period January 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020, COVID-19 illness is an "injury" that is presumptively covered under the worker's compensation program and that COVID-19 claims made on or before December 30, 2020 are not included in the employer's experience rating. If available, federal relief funds must be deposited in the worker's compensation fund to cover the estimated cost of the coverage provided for COVID-19 illnesses;
- The bill amends an existing liability immunity statute related to public health emergencies to clarify its applicability to business entities and to clarify the types of conduct to which it applies;
- The bill authorizes the Department of Workforce Services to grant a new worker's compensation premium credit (premium holiday) to Wyoming employers and authorizes that credit to be used through June of 2021. A premium credit authorized by the Legislature in the 2020 Budget Session is also extended through June of 2021;
- The bill allows the Department of Workforce Services to delay employer's worker's compensation and unemployment compensation premiums if federal relief funds are available to fund the delayed payments and for a period that maintains the actuarial soundness of both programs;
- Currently, federal law is providing additional unemployment benefits to workers impacted by COVID-19. Federal funds pay for these benefits. This bill allows the Governor, by executive order, to declare that these benefits, and other benefits related to COVID-19, will not be charged to an employer's unemployment compensation account;
- The bill authorizes the Department of Workforce Services and the Governor to enter into an agreement with the federal Department of Labor for a temporary short-time compensation program (workshare program). Short-time compensation programs

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provide benefits to employers who reduce their workforce hours but do not lay-off or terminate employees;

- The bill establishes two options for the operation of housing assistance programs by the Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA). Under one option, a landlord providing a home to a residential tenant can apply for benefits if the landlord is losing at least 25% of rent payments, the tenant is unable to pay rent and the tenant's job has been impacted by COVID-19. The landlord cannot evict the tenant or charge additional rent while participating in the program. The other option provides rent, security deposit, mortgage payment and hazard insurance assistance to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this program, the WCDA must establish eligibility income thresholds and mandatory copayment obligations and benefits received from other programs must be deducted from any program benefits. A \$15,000,000.00 appropriation of federal funds is provided for operation of these programs.

**Comments:**

- Creates a new housing assistance program;
- Appropriates \$15,000,000.00 of federal relief funds.

NOTE: Final action on this bill was not taken at the time this summary was prepared. Should changes be made to the bill upon final passage, an updated summary will be prepared and placed upon the legislative website at <http://wyoleg.gov>. A packet of updated summaries will be sent to all legislators after the time for any veto has expired (fifteen days after adjournment).

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