

Enzi staff digs into stimulus plan

By JARED MILLER

Star-Tribune capital bureau

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CHEYENNE -- Sen. Mike Enzi's staff continues to sift through the \$787 billion federal economic stimulus plan for clues about what the package holds for Wyoming -n but so far the work is slow going, a spokeswoman said.

Press secretary Elly Pickett said Enzi's entire staff has been assigned to the stimulus, but the massive size of the package, and a lack of detail in the legislation, is delaying the analysis.

"The bill itself doesn't even have the kind of detail we need," Pickett said. "And it seem like some of the regulations are still going to have to be written at this point."

In response to an inquiry from the Star-Tribune, Pickett explained that Enzi is reluctant to release preliminary numbers about Wyoming's potential share of the stimulus funds because the figures may later prove inaccurate.

Pickett said the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service are compiling a report that will serve as the official estimate of money available to states.

"We're not going to just give out numbers for the heck of it. We want them to be right," Pickett said. "When we have some that we feel are as accurate as they can be, I can see no reason why we wouldn't [release them]."

Pickett indicated that members of Congress that have already released figures may be doing so for political reasons.

"The people that are releasing those are from delegations that are trying to justify and sell their vote of support for the bill back to their constituents," said Pickett, adding that those preliminary numbers are "ballpark at best."

Pickett also said she did not know if the united opposition to the stimulus by Wyoming's congressional delegates would hurt the state's chances of receiving a fair share of the federal dollars.

Sens. Enzi and John Barrasso, and Rep. Cynthia Lummis, all R-Wyo., voted against the stimulus plan.

An accountant by trade, Enzi has called the Democrat-supported stimulus "bailout baloney."

"This legislation is the single most expensive bill in the history of the United States and is being sold to the American people as a compromise. Buyer beware," Enzi said in a statement released shortly before the Senate approved the bill.

Early figures released by The Associated Press indicated that Wyoming could receive a \$400 million share of stimulus funds, but later stories said the final number is unclear.

A release from the White House this week said Wyoming could see 8,000 new jobs as a result of the stimulus, but no confirmation of those numbers has been made available.

Gov. Dave Freudenthal told reporters Wednesday that he intends to reject stimulus dollars for projects that aren't a good match for Wyoming.

Freudenthal also said he won't release preliminary figures about the stimulus plan because they may raise unreasonable expectations.

Contact capital bureau reporter Jared Miller at 307-632-1244 or jared.miller@trib.com. Read Jared's blog at trib.com/blog

