

Lummis says she's wary of Obama plan for economy

By The Associated Press

CHEYENNE - Sworn in Tuesday as Wyoming's new U.S. representative, Cynthia Lummis said she's wary of President-elect Barack Obama's likely economic stimulus proposal, and she will push to block congressional pay increases.

Obama has asked state and local government leaders to submit requests that could be funded under an economic stimulus package totaling as much as \$775 billion nationwide. Gov. Dave Freudenthal this week turned in a Wyoming wish list adding up to \$1 billion, including \$400 million in highway funding.

Lummis, a Republican, said she is wary of stimulating the economy through "pork barrel spending." She said she hadn't seen Freudenthal's requests, but believes tax cuts would be an effective economic stimulus.

"Of course, Wyoming's economy is strong, and that will be a factor in how I vote in the stimulus package," Lummis said.

Also Tuesday, Lummis co-sponsored two bills that would repeal this year's automatic congressional pay increase and block next year's increase.

Representatives last year made \$169,300. An automatic increase this year boosts that to \$174,000 - unless the bill repealing the 2.8 percent increase passes. A separate bill would block the 2010 automatic increase.

Lummis said she is putting out feelers about committee assignments through the office of House Minority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio. Lummis said she would especially like a seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

"But it is highly unlikely that a freshman will be appointed to that committee," Lummis said.

After that, Lummis said she's got her eyes on possible assignments to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and on the House Ethics Committee.

"Although I do not know where I will be placed, I have made it clear that budget, fiscal responsibility, ethical conduct and government that works for the people are high priorities with me," she said.

Lummis replaces Republican Rep. Barbara Cubin, who served seven terms and didn't seek re-election last year. Lummis beat Democrat Gary Trauner 53 percent to 42 percent in the November election.