



The 2024 Budget Session of the 67th Wyoming Legislature has adjourned and AGC of Wyoming closely tracked many bills that would affect Wyoming's construction industry and businesses. Once the filing deadline passed, the legislature considered a total of 365 bills. Of that total, 125 (or 34.2%) made it all the way through the process and proceeded to the governor's office for approval.

AGC of Wyoming tracked 79 different bills throughout the session. To break that number down, we supported 24 bills, we opposed 2 bills, and the rest we just monitored. When it was all said and done, 23 bills that AGC of Wyoming tracked passed the legislature. Of that number, 14 were bills we supported, and neither of the bills we opposed passed.

Of the 10 bills that we supported that did not make it through the process, 4 of those bills failed their introductory vote or were not even considered for introduction and died without any debate or hearings. All told, of bills that were introduced and started their way through the legislative process, AGC of Wyoming's success rate on bills we supported was 70%, and 100% on killing bills we opposed.

25/26 Biennial Budget

The #1 priority and hottest topic throughout the session was the passage of the 25/26 biennial budget. Both chambers had two rounds of amending the original bill they were presented from the Joint Appropriations committee. Once that process was over, there was a \$1.1 billion difference between the House and Senate positions. After some high drama and political wrangling, the two chambers were able to come to a consensus and a budget was passed. The total 25/26 biennial budget came in at \$10.6 billion (including capital construction and school finance), \$300 million below the governor's recommended budget. Approximately \$700 million is being put into savings.

Property Tax

Another mandate given to the 67th legislature was providing property tax relief and reform. Wyoming's property taxes have seen, on average, double digit increases in the past 3 years, and it was a top priority to help those who were struggling. The legislature passed 5 bills related to property tax:

- HB0003 Property tax exemption for long-term homeowners. – This bill provides an exemption for owners of a primary residence if the owner or their spouse is 65 years or older and the owner or their spouse has paid residential property tax in Wyoming for 25 years or more. The exemption is 50% of the assessed value.
- HB0004 Property tax refund program. – Amended the qualifications for the already existing property tax refund program to allow more people to qualify.
- HB0045 Property tax exemption-residential structures and land. – This bill exempts any amount of assessed value of a single family residential structure that is in excess of the prior year assessed value plus 4%.
- SF0054 Homeowner tax exemption. – Allows an exemption of 25% of the fair market value of a single-family residential structure, up to \$2,000,000. This exemption is for tax years 2024



and 2025 only. This bill provides a backfill from the state coffers to local entities that will see a reduction in property tax revenue.

- SF0089 Veterans ad valorem exemption-amount. – This bill increased the exemption amount allowed for the existing veterans tax exemption program from \$3,000 to \$6,000.

Here's a rundown of the bills we supported that passed the legislature.

Transportation Related Bills

- HB0008 Commercial driver license-hazardous materials endorsement. – This bill allows 18-20 year olds the ability to receive a hazardous materials endorsement on their CDL for intrastate driving.
- HB0023 Vehicle registration e-certificate and grace period. – This bill allows county treasurers to issue electronic proof of registration. Drivers will be able to show that electronic proof of registration to law enforcement, when necessary.
- HB0086 Vehicle lien-amendments. – Requires towing and recovery services to request a title search within 5 business days of a vehicle remaining in the recover lot after 5 business days. Requires WYDOT to respond within 5 business days.
- SF0113 Light and high-profile vehicle closures-2. – This bill increases the penalties for violations of road closures for light and high-profile vehicles. The original bill had very stringent penalties including a \$2,500 fine and suspension of a license on the first offense. The bill was amended to lessen and graduate the penalties for subsequent offenses which made this bill easier to support.

Mineral & Business Related Bills

- HB0033 Mining operations-blasting requirements. – This bill specifies requirements for blasting in non-coal mines, including minimum standards and requirements related to the blasting plan.
- HB0064 Fire prevention and electrical safety-amendments. – This bill changed the allocation of the fees paid for electrical inspections to provide additional state electrical inspectors.
- SF0044 Limited mining operations-amendments. – This bill amended the statutes related to limited mining operations, including phasing out the “small mine” classification, increasing the bonding rates for new LMOs, and specifying that the bond may be released after two successful growing seasons in reclamation with landowner approval. This bill hit a small bump in the road late with a detrimental amendment related to LMO development on state lands, however, I was able to work with the joint conference committee on the bill to get the amendment scaled back to a more palatable position. In a late development, Governor Gordon vetoed this bill precisely because of the amendment related to state lands. We will be back to the drawing board on this issue over the interim.
- SF0114 Contractor licenses-reciprocal recognition requirements. – This bill requires reciprocity by cities, towns and counties for contractor licenses issued by other cities,

LEGISLATIVE

UPDATE



KELLI LITTLE,
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

towns and counties in the state of Wyoming. We provided an amendment requiring proof of a minimum level of competency for the accepting jurisdiction to grant reciprocity, giving ICC certification as a baseline.

Other Bills

We also tracked several bills related to education funding, alternative forms of education including charter schools and education savings accounts, investment of unemployment funds for maximum return to be used for workforce development, broadband development, protection of Wyoming's standing in federal natural resource and land use planning, and more.

With the session complete, there is a short rest here in March before Management Council (legislative leadership) meets to determine the joint committee interim topics on Monday, April 1. Some of the topics we are expecting to follow include WYDOT funding and sustainability, state construction long-term planning, continued tweaking of non-mineral mining statutes, and more. Once the topics are available, I will send an update and convene our legislative committee to give an overview of the interim gameplan.

Thank you to all of those who checked in, provided input, and asked for updates along the way. AGC of Wyoming's legislative success is dependent on active participation, and I can't thank you all enough. If there are any concerns or questions, I am always available by email kelli@agcwyo.org or phone (307) 760-6926.

Kelli Little
Director of Government Affairs
AGC of Wyoming