

Hello Sublette County and LaBarge, this is Albert Sommers reporting from Friday, February 16, the end of the first week of the Budget Session.

Today, "Any questions?" was repeated by each member of the House Appropriations Committee after outlining a section of House Bill 1, the budget bill. The simple question invited fellow Representatives to ask for clarification and share concerns regarding the budget bill.

Back on February 12, Day 1 of the session, legislators had received a draft of the budget bill, which had undergone weeks of scrutiny and mark-ups in the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC). By the end of last week, House members of the JAC were meticulously explaining each budget section. They answered questions from fellow Representatives, ensuring transparency and informed decision-making.

Time is our enemy in a Budget Session. We prioritize urgent fiscal matters, often leaving little room for other legislative proposals, which is exactly how the Wyoming Constitution intends a Budget Session to work.

In this 2024 Budget Session, out of 221 bills and 8 joint resolutions filed in the House, the second most in Budget Session history, 90 House bills and 4 resolutions died due to time constraints today, on Friday the 16th. Which is to say that 135 pieces of legislation were voted on during the introduction process. For comparison, during the previous Budget Session, in 2022, out of 163 pieces of legislation filed in the House, 52 died from the clock running out, and 111 were voted on for introduction. So even though many bills died this year, 24 more pieces of legislation were voted on this session than in the Budget Session of 2022.

Despite their importance to individual legislators, bills can fall victim to the ticking of the clock as lawmakers grapple with prioritizing budgetary concerns. Three of my five filed bills died before they had an introductory vote, and only one of my bills, [HB0052](#) - Property tax-homestead exemption, survived to be introduced to a committee. It's a delicate balance where the fight against the clock can overshadow the pursuit of broader legislative goals.

I greatly appreciate the work of Appropriations Committee members and LSO budget staff. These folks put an incredible amount of time and countless hours into analyzing the budget, asking the hard questions, and preparing the information to present to the House body.

The budget now moves forward to be worked in the House in 2nd Reading on Monday.

I can be reached at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com) with questions or comments.