

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5868

As Passed House
April 21, 1993

Title: An act relating to consolidation of state agencies.

Brief Description: Creating the department of economic and community development.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Trade, Technology & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Skratek, Bluechel, Sheldon, Erwin, Deccio, M. Rasmussen, Snyder, Gaspard and Winsley).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, April 1, 1993, DPA;
Passed House, April 21, 1993, 70-24.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Voloria, Vice Chair; Campbell; Conway; and Pruitt.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Reams, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Dyer.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: The Department of Community Development (DCD) was established to provide financial and technical assistance to local communities. DCD has a broad range of responsibilities, including: administering federal and state grants and programs; administering community service programs such as Energy Assistance, Headstart, and Weatherization programs; assisting in the development of low and moderate income housing programs; coordinating local volunteer efforts; providing a state-level focus for fire protection services; administering a cultural heritage program; coordinating the Emergency Services Program; administering certain family services and programs; and assisting growth management efforts.

The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) was established in 1985, replacing the Department of Commerce

and Economic Development. DTED provides financial and technical assistance to local governments and businesses in the state in the areas of business expansion, foreign and domestic outreach, tourism development, film and video production outreach, business assistance, targeted sector industries, and international trade opportunities.

Summary of Bill:

I. DCD/DTED MERGER

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development is created. As of July 1, 1994, DCD and DTED are abolished and all of their powers, duties, and functions are transferred to the new department. All documents, records, equipment, funds, and assets are transferred to the department. All employees are transferred in accordance with state civil service and collective bargaining laws. All rules, pending business, contracts, and obligations of the abolished agencies will be continued and acted on by the department. The director of the Office of Financial Management will resolve questions arising from the transfer.

The director of the department will be appointed by the governor, subject to Senate confirmation. The director is given administrative authority over the department. The department is given responsibility for promoting community and economic development in the state. General functional areas of the new department are detailed.

The directors of DTED and DCD will jointly submit a transition plan to the governor by November 15, 1993. The directors are required to analyze existing programs and make recommendations for change. An advisory committee of affected stakeholders will be established.

II. EXISTING PROGRAMS REPEALED

The following DTED programs are repealed: (1) Foreign and Domestic Outreach; (2) Business Expansion and Trade Development; (3) Tourism Development; (4) Film and Video Production; (5) Local Economic Development Service; (6) Washington Ambassador; and (7) Targeted Sectors.

The following DCD programs are repealed: (1) Local Development Matching Fund; (2) Facilitation of Business Siting; (3) Urban-Rural Links; and (4) Community Revitalization Team.

III. MISCELLANEOUS

The Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board is required to coordinate with the department in certain areas. The Department of Employment Security is added to the Senior Environmental Corps Program. The Business Assistance Center is extended for two years. The center will terminate on June 30, 1995.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Sections 80 and 81 take effect immediately. Sections 1 through 7, 9 through 79, 82 and 83 take effect July 1, 1994. Section 8 takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Studies have found that there is fragmentation, duplication of services, and insufficient coordination between state and local programs in the area of economic development.

Economic development programs are of inadequate scope and scale to meet the broad needs of local communities and businesses. Additionally, they are not evaluated for effectiveness on an ongoing, systematic basis. The state needs a single, coherent economic development policy.

The governor supports the merger. Economic development works best at the local level. The effectiveness of economic and community development efforts can be enhanced by increasing the capacity of community-based groups to deliver needed services. We don't need to study this further, but should move ahead with implementation planning.

Testimony Against: The intent section, as well as the whole bill, is too focused on economic development. DCD programs are barely mentioned. The prioritization of federal community development block grants funds for economic development projects upsets current priorities and is in conflict with the thrust of the federal regulations. State resources should not be targeted in this fashion. The transition plan is too specific and too focused on economic development.

Merger is fine, but this bill goes far beyond merger. DCD has a great relationship with local entities that has been evolving over 26 years. DCD has acted in behalf of local governments with other state agencies. Move carefully in changing this relationship.

Witnesses: Senator Sylvia Skratek, prime sponsor (pro); Steve Hodes, Office of the Governor (pro); Barbara Gooding, Department of Community Development (pro); Mike Fitzgerald, Department of Trade and Economic Development (pro); Stan

Finkelstein, Association of Washington Cities (concerned);
Judy Frolich, Association of Counties (concerned); Pat
Jones, Washington Public Port Association (concerned); and
Mike Ryherd, Low Income Housing Congress (con).