

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2441

C 189 L 00

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Increasing government accountability through the state sunset review process.

Sponsors: By House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Wensman, Ogden, Rockefeller, McMorris, Alexander, Regala, Mielke, Doumit, Thomas, Kessler, Hatfield, O'Brien, Lisk, McDonald, Carlson, Conway, Mulliken, Koster, Woods, Talcott, Huff, Radcliff, Wolfe, Ruderman, Edmonds, Pflug, Parlette, Esser, Hurst and Benson; by request of Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee).

House Committee on State Government
Senate Committee on State & Local Government

Background:

The Legislature may schedule a program or agency to be terminated under the sunset review process. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) must conduct a program and fiscal review of the program or entity scheduled for termination and prepare a preliminary report of its review by June 30 of the year prior to the termination date. The factors the JLARC must use when conducting the review are specified by statute and vary depending on whether the entity being terminated is a regulatory entity. After the JLARC completes the preliminary report, the Office of Financial Management may then conduct its own review by September 30 of the same year. The JLARC must transmit a copy of the final report to the Legislature, the Governor, the affected agency, and the State Library.

Subsequent to receipt of the final report, the appropriate standing committees of the House and Senate must hold hearings to consider the final report and any related data. Following the hearing, the committees may propose legislation reestablishing, modifying, or transferring the functions of the program or agency.

If an agency is terminated under the sunset process, it continues its existence until June 30 of the next succeeding year.

The sunset review process expires on June 30, 2000.

Summary of Bill:

The sunset review process can be applied to any "entity," which includes state offices, boards, commissions, units or sub-units, and agencies. "Entity" also includes programs and activities involving less than the full responsibility of a state agency, and parts of the Revised Code of Washington.

Unless provided otherwise, the sunset review process must take at least seven years. An entity scheduled for sunset termination must develop performance measures and data collection plans subject to review and comment by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). The entity bears the burden of demonstrating the extent to which performance results have been achieved.

The JLARC may complete its review of the entity at any time during the calendar year prior to the entity's termination. If the Office of Financial Management issues a response to the JLARC review, the response must be included in the JLARC's final report, along with any response by the affected entity. The factors that the JLARC must consider when reviewing an entity are changed, and no longer vary depending on whether the entity is a regulatory entity. The new factors the JLARC must consider include the extent to which the entity is meeting its performance measures and the possible impact of the termination or modification of the entity.

The requirement that the standing committees of the Legislature hold hearings after the final report is completed is eliminated.

The termination date for the sunset review process is extended until June 30, 2015.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 96 1
Senate 44 0 (Senate amended)
House 98 0 (House concurred)

Effective: June 8, 2000