

2671-S2

Sponsor(s): House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Romero, Reardon, Simpson, Gombosky, Grant, Voloria, Kessler, Conway, Doumit, Hatfield, Ogden, Morris, Kenney, Dickerson, Edwards, Chase, Schual-Berke, Wood, Rockefeller, Jackley, Kagi and McDermott)

Brief Description: Creating the permit assistance center in the department of ecology. (REVISED FOR ENGROSSED: Creating the permit assistance center in the office of the governor.)

**HB 2671-S2.E - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Finds that as the number of environmental and land use laws have grown in Washington, so have the number of permits required of business and government. The increasing number of individual permits and permit authorities has generated the potential for conflict, overlap, and duplication between the various state, local, and federal permits. Lack of coordination in the processing of permit applications may cause costly delays and frustration to the applicant.

Finds that a range of assistance and coordination options should be available to project applicants from a state office independent of any local, state, or federal permit agency.

Finds that citizens, businesses, and project applicants should be provided with: (1) A reliable and consolidated source of information concerning federal, state, and local environmental and land use laws and procedures that may apply to any given project;

(2) Facilitated interagency forums for discussion of significant issues related to the multiple permitting processes if needed for some project applicants; and

(3) Active coordination of all applicable regulatory and land use permitting procedures if needed for some project applicants.

Declares that the purpose of this act is to transfer the existing permit assistance center in the department of ecology to a new office of permit assistance in the office of financial management to: (1) Assure that citizens, businesses, and project applicants will continue to be provided with vital information regarding environmental and land use laws and with assistance in complying with environmental and land use laws to promote understanding of these laws and to protect public health and safety and the environment;

(2) Ensure that facilitation of project permit decisions by permit agencies promotes both process efficiency and environmental protection;

(3) Allow for coordination of permit processing for large projects upon project applicants' request and at project applicants' expense to promote efficiency, ensure certainty, and avoid conflicts among permit agencies; and

(4) Provide these services through an office independent of any permit agency to ensure that any potential or perceived conflicts of interest related to providing these services or making

permit decisions can be avoided.

Declares an intent that establishing an office of permit assistance will provide these services without abrogating or limiting the authority of any permit agency to make decisions on permits that it issues, and therefore declares that the office of permit assistance shall have authority to provide these services but shall not have any authority to make decisions on permits.

Creates the office of permit assistance in the office of financial management and shall be administered by the office of the governor to assist citizens, businesses, and project applicants.

Transfers the powers, duties, and functions of the permit assistance center at the department of ecology to the center created in this act.

Provides that the act shall be null and void if appropriations are not approved.

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2671-S2

March 26, 2002

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 9 and 18, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2671 entitled: "AN ACT Relating to a permit assistance center within the department of ecology;"

Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2671 establishes an office of permit assistance in the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to be administered by the Governor. The bill will move the permit assistance center currently in operation at the Department of Ecology (DOE) to OFM, and extend its reach.

Section 9 of the bill would have established an eleven-member advisory council to assess the performance of the permit assistance office, review customer surveys, and make performance improvement recommendations, among other things. However, no funding was provided in the budget to support the advisory council, and such a council is not essential. The new office will provide biennial reports to the governor and the legislature, and DOE will also be forming an advisory committee.

The emergency clause in section 18 of the bill has also been vetoed. OFM, the Governor's Office and DOE will need time to establish the new office.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 9 and 18 of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2671.

With the exception of sections 9 and 18, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2671 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Locke  
Governor