

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2658

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community & Economic Development & Trade

Title: An act relating to refocusing the mission of the department of commerce, including transferring programs.

Brief Description: Refocusing the department of commerce, including transferring programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Maxwell, McCoy and Morrell; by request of Washington State Department of Commerce.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community & Economic Development & Trade: 1/20/10, 2/1/10 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the transfer of the Department of Commerce (Department) powers, duties, and functions pertaining to certain programs and activities to other state agencies.
- Provides findings, goals and policies related to energy, the economy and the environment, and requires the Department with guidance of an advisory committee to develop an updated state energy strategy and implementation report by December 1, 2010.
- Directs the Department to create a central point of access for small business and entrepreneurial assistance.
- Directs the Department to establish a separate division for community services and housing programs.
- Requires the Legislature's economic development committees, in consultation with others, to develop a plan for 2011 legislative consideration to create a separate state agency focused on community services and housing.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRADE

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Maxwell, Vice Chair; Chase, Liias, Moeller and Probst.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Smith, Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt.

Staff: Meg VanSchoorl (786-7105).

Background:

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) was created in 1994 through the consolidation of the Department of Community Development and the Department of Trade and Economic Development. The DCTED was responsible for promoting community and economic development statewide by assisting communities to increase their economic vitality and the quality of their citizen's lives, and assisting the state's businesses to maintain and increase their economic competitiveness while maintaining a healthy environment.

The Department of Commerce.

In 2009 legislation was enacted to create a state Department of Commerce (Department) as a successor agency to the DCTED. While the legislation did include sections changing the DCTED's name in many statutes, it did not contain policy decisions regarding the future of programs within the Department. Instead, the legislation directed the Department to consult with a broad range of stakeholders statewide and develop, by November 1, 2009, a report for the Governor and legislative committees.

That report was to include analysis and recommendations for statutory changes that would ensure that the Department would feature, among other elements: a concise core mission, accountability, leveraged resources, maximized partnerships, and increased local capacity building. The report was also to include recommendations for creating or consolidating programs important to meeting the Department's core mission, and for terminating or transferring programs that were inconsistent with the core mission. The Department produced the required report, and after further consultations, submitted this agency request bill.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Section 1: The Legislature affirms the Department's mission to grow and improve jobs, and the eight priorities identified in its 2009 report to the Legislature. The Legislature directs the Department to create a central point of access for small business and entrepreneurial assistance, and to collaborate with other agencies and partners over time on small business financing, regulatory and technical assistance initiatives. The Legislature directs the Department to establish a separate division to contain community services and housing programs. Seventeen specific services or programs to be included in the division are

identified, but the division is not limited to those named. The Legislature's economic development committees, in consultation with the Governor and the Department, must solicit stakeholder information and advice and develop for legislative consideration in 2011 a plan to establish a separate state government agency focused on community services and housing.

Parts I, II, III, V, and VI: All powers, duties and functions of the Department pertaining to the following programs are transferred from the Department to other state agencies:

Parts I and II: To the Department of Health.

- County Public Health Assistance (sections 101-102).
- Developmental Disabilities Endowment (sections 201-204).

Part III: To the Department of General Administration.

- State Building Code Council (sections 301-305 and 308).
- To the extent funding is provided, the Department must develop and implement a strategic plan for enhancing energy efficiency in and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from homes, buildings, districts, and neighborhoods (section 306) as well as a methodology and implementation strategy related to determining an energy performance score for residential buildings (section 307).

Part V: To the Criminal Justice Training Commission.

- Drug Prosecution Assistance program (sections 501-502).

Part VI: To the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC).

- Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (sections 601-602).

Each transfer section includes common language regarding transfer of personnel, appropriations, apportionment of budgeted funds, documents, files, office equipment and other tangible property from the Department to the receiving agency.

Part IV: State Energy Strategy. Findings and goals are provided relating to: the national and world transition to the clean energy economy; maintaining competitive energy prices; increasing competitiveness by fostering a clean energy economy and jobs; and, meeting the state's obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Twelve state policies related to energy are included.

By December 1, 2010, and every five years thereafter, the Department must produce a fully updated state energy strategy and implementation report with the guidance of an advisory committee appointed by the Director of the Department to represent a balance of interests. The strategy must examine the state's entire energy system to the maximum extent feasible and provide specific recommendations. The report may include recommendations for legislation. The Department must seek in-kind and financial support for the process, must review related processes and documents, and the resulting strategy must be consistent with relevant statutorily-authorized energy and climate policies, goals, and programs. Following a public hearing on the advisory committee's recommendations for revisions to the strategy, the written report must be produced by the Department, and conveyed to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees. The advisory committee must be dissolved within three months of the report being conveyed.

The Department may not intervene in adjudicative proceedings by the UTC, but may seek approval to submit amicus curiae briefs on relevant matters. The Department may not intervene in proceedings of utilities not regulated by the UTC.

Part VII: The Municipal Research Council is abolished and its powers, duties, and functions are transferred to the Department (sections 701 - 709).

Part VIII: The 1967 statute abolishing the State Census Board is decodified (section 801).

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds legislative findings, intent, and direction related to focusing assistance on small business and entrepreneurs and creating a separate division for community services and housing programs. It also adds a requirement for the Legislature's economic development committees to develop a plan for creating a separate state agency for community services and housing programs. The substitute bill reduces the number of statutory programs transferred from the Department to other state agencies from 10 to five. The substitute bill revises findings and direction related to energy goals, policies, and the development of a state energy strategy. The substitute bill prescribes when and if the Department may intervene in proceedings by the UTC or consumer-owned utilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Department has conducted a credible process. I agree with some of the proposed program transfers but there needs to be more thought given to some, especially in the area of community services and housing. The Governor wants the Department to have a laser focus on jobs, which is not currently the case when the Department has 132 programs staffed by over 300 employees. Our process involved thousands of stakeholders in person and through a web-based survey. We understand there are concerns because change is difficult. Energy is a critical sector for future economic development and the lack of an up-to-date strategy has handicapped our state in competing for federal Recovery Act dollars. The Department should have the ability to intervene in UTC hearings — it is the only agency prohibited from doing so. The mission of ending homelessness is consistent with the mission of the Department and so these programs should stay with other community services and housing programs within the Department. We are neutral on the transfer of Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) administratively to the UTC but want each to maintain its independence in decision-making.

(Neutral) We support the language preserving the bargaining rights of transferred employees.

(With concerns) We support the idea of a separate division for community services and housing programs and would like the Independent Youth Housing Program to be included in it. We are neutral on moving the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) but think that it would be a good fit within a separate community services and housing division. We are concerned about the three housing programs being lost within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The idea of a separate division is a good one for the short-term, and would want the three programs to be kept together in one place, wherever that is. We are concerned about moving the State Building Code Council (Council) to the Department of Labor and Industries. The Council is focused on standard setting, not enforcement, and would be a better fit within the division of Engineering and Architectural Services in the Department of General Administration.

(Opposed) We support the idea of a separate division for community services and housing programs and would like the Dispute Resolution Centers, the Community Mobilization program, and the sexual assault programs to be in it rather than be transferred to the DSHS. Including a list of the state's energy policies and goals in the bill is premature and presupposes the outcomes of a stakeholder-guided updating of the state's energy strategy. The Department would not have standing to intervene in the UTC's hearings. There needs to be a separation between the Department's policy advocacy role and the UTC's regulatory role.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Rogers Weed, Department of Commerce; Seth Dawson, Washington State Coalition for the Homeless; Bryce Yadon, Washington Economic Development Association; and Tom DeBoer, Puget Sound Energy.

(Neutral) Alia Griffins, Washington Federation of State Employees.

(With concerns) Laurie Lippold, Mockingbird Society; Nick Federici, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance; Stan Bowman, American Institute of Architects Washington Council; Dave Warren, Washington Public Utility District; Kathleen Collins, PacifiCorp; and Louise Ryan, Washington Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

(Opposed) Anna Shelton, Resolution Washington; Steve Jewell, Safe Streets of Pierce County; Lonnie Johns-Brown, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; and Chris McCabe, Association of Washington Businesses.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.