

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1178

As of March 7, 2011

Title: An act relating to the office of regulatory assistance.

Brief Description: Addressing the office of regulatory assistance.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton and Miloscia; by request of Office of Regulatory Assistance.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/03/11, 92-6; 3/03/11, 62-36.

Committee Activity: Economic Development, Trade & Innovation:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE & INNOVATION

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: In 1995 the Legislature imposed requirements on some agencies when they adopt significant legislative rules. The Office of Financial Management is obligated to report to the Governor and the Legislature on the effects of these requirements on the regulatory system in the state.

The Washington State Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) was created in the Office of Financial Management in 2003. In 2009 the Legislature substantially changed ORA's statute, providing for gubernatorial appointment of the Director, re-stating ORA's purpose and increasing the scope of its work. ORA seeks to improve the function of environmental and business regulatory processes by identifying conflicts and overlaps in the state's rules, statutes, and operational practices.

ORA provides a variety of services, including acting as the central point of contact and coordination for project proponents, conducting project scoping, and assisting in conflict resolution. The ORA is to assist local jurisdictions with their local project review requirements, report biennially on performance, and provide biennial recommendations on system improvements.

The Sunset statutes direct that, absent specific action by the Legislature, ORA will cease to exist on June 30, 2011. In 2010 ORA was subject to a sunset review by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). The following recommendations were made by JLARC:

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.

- the Legislature should continue the ORA without further sunset reviews;
- ORA should include in its biennial reports information on tasks that are and are not working; and
- ORA should improve its reports to the Legislature for purposes of tracking previous performance targets.

Summary of Bill: ORA, rather than the Office of Financial Management, is to report on the effects of agency requirements regarding significant legislative rules.

The termination date for ORA is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 29, 2011.