

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6221

As of January 21, 2016

Title: An act relating to promoting economic development through improving regulatory processes and providing technical assistance to businesses.

Brief Description: Promoting economic development through improving regulatory processes and providing technical assistance to businesses.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Angel, Braun, Hewitt and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Trade & Economic Development: 1/20/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

Background: The mission of the Department of Commerce (Department) is to grow and improve jobs in Washington, facilitate innovation, and streamline access to business assistance and economic development services by providing them through sector-based, cluster-based, and regional partners. Industry clusters targeted by the Department include aerospace, agriculture, food processing, forest products, marine services, health and biomedical, software, digital and interactive media, transportation and distribution and microelectronics.

A business regulatory efficiency program administered by the Department was established in 2013. The Department and the Office of Regulatory Assistance are authorized to conduct one or more annual multi-jurisdictional regulatory streamlining projects, beginning with the manufacturing sector. Upon completion of a streamlining project, the Department must document and distribute the streamlined laws, rules, and processes to the Association of Washington Cities and Washington State Association of Counties for distribution to their members.

Summary of Bill: The Department must develop business assistance materials to provide information about Washington's business and regulatory requirements and efforts to streamline government regulations. Business assistance efforts must be prioritized by collaborating with businesses in key industry sectors, including sectors participating in regulatory streamlining pilot projects.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The restaurant guide for opening a business in Seattle contains plain language that takes a business through all the steps they need to open and run their business. The information is consolidated in one place to assist businesses with state and local regulations. Navigation tools that assist business, both in printed materials and online information, are important tools, especially for small businesses. New businesses often don't know all the questions they are supposed to ask, so having navigation tools and templates help businesses better understand what other questions they may have to open and operate their business. Expanding these efforts to other industries, including construction and retail, would help small business owners in Washington.

OTHER: The Department of Commerce reads the bill to continue to implement the work they are already doing with the regulatory roadmap. The program starts by asking businesses what help they need to improve their experience in understanding, predicting, and complying with regulations. In the process, regulatory gaps or conflicts are identified and may be addressed. There is also a regulatory roadmap project working with manufacturers in Snohomish County. In addition to printed materials, there is online information that is available, including interactive online worksheets to assist manufactures seeking to site facilities in several cities in Snohomish County. The maritime sector has expressed interest in participating in the program.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Brown, prime sponsor; Sheri Nelson, Assoc of WA Business; Lori Mattson, Tri-City Regional Chamber/President/COE; Mark Johnson, Washington Retail Association.

OTHER: Cheryl Smith, Dept of Commerce.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.