
**Innovation, Community & Economic
Development, & Veterans Committee**

HB 1623

Brief Description: Concerning regional economic development visions and action plans.

Sponsors: Representatives Volz, Chapman, Walsh, Maycumber, Paul, Graham, Ryu, Chambers, Ybarra, Barnard, Christian, Walen, Tharinger and Shavers.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Commerce to lead and facilitate the development of a regional economic development vision and action plan for each region of the state that includes a county that is eligible to be categorized as a distressed area based on its employment rate.

Hearing Date: 2/1/23

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) is responsible for promoting community and economic development within the state by assisting the state's communities to increase the quality of life of their citizens and their economic vitality, and by assisting the state's businesses to maintain and increase their economic competitiveness, while maintaining a healthy environment. Commerce's community and economic development responsibilities include:

- providing advisory assistance to the Governor, other state agencies, and the Legislature on community and economic development matters;
- assisting the Governor in coordinating the activities of state agencies that have an impact on local government and communities;
- cooperating with the Legislature and the Governor in the development and implementation

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- of strategic plans for the state's community and economic development efforts;
- soliciting private and federal grants for economic and community development programs and administering such programs;
- cooperating with and providing technical and financial assistance to local governments, businesses, and community-based organizations for the purpose of aiding and encouraging orderly, productive, and coordinated development of the state; and
- conducting research and analysis in furtherance of the state's economic and community development efforts, including maintaining current information on market, demographic, and economic trends as they affect different industrial sectors, geographic regions, and communities with special economic and social problems in the state.

Summary of Bill:

By December 1, 2024, and every 10 years thereafter, Commerce is required to lead and facilitate the development of a regional economic development vision and action plan for each region of the state that includes a county that is eligible to be categorized as a distressed area due to its unemployment rate. There must be at least five regional vision and action plans completed, with the boundaries of the regions to be determined at the discretion of Commerce after outreach to affected communities.

The purpose of each regional economic development vision and action plan is to assist with synchronizing local government policies and actions, and to guide and inform state funding and policies connected to the economic development objectives. The action plans do not have the force of law and may not compel any local or state action. In developing the vision and action plans, Commerce must coordinate with local economic development organizations, local government officials, the private sector business community, nonprofit organizations, and local labor organizations. Commerce shall survey the local community with respect to their goals for the future of the local economy. Commerce must request the cooperation of other state agencies for research and analysis that may be required to complete the vision and action plans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2023.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.