

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/CS/HB 7107 PCB RORS 14-02 PCB RORS 14-02 Administrative Procedures
SPONSOR(S): Government Operations Subcommittee, Rulemaking Oversight & Repeal Subcommittee,
Richardson
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1706

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
Orig. Comm.: Rulemaking Oversight & Repeal Subcommittee	11 Y, 0 N	Miller	Rubottom
1) Government Operations Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N, As CS	Stramski	Williamson
2) State Affairs Committee	14 Y, 0 N, As CS	Stramski	Camechis

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill amends the rulemaking procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act relating to public notices and the preparation of statements of estimated regulatory costs (SERC), beginning in the period of rule development.

The bill amends the statutory rulemaking process by:

- Conforming the information required in notices of rule development with certain information required for notices of proposed rules.
- Requiring published notices of proposed rules to state whether the agency conducted a rule development workshop.
- Requiring agencies to make certain documents available by hyperlink from published notices to the agency website.
- Amending the requirements for rule development to include in workshops and other public hearings the development of information beneficial to the preparation of a SERC.
- Requiring agencies to ensure the availability of personnel responsible for preparing a SERC at rule development workshops, hearings, and public hearings on proposed rules.
- Providing new factors agencies must consider when evaluating the impact of proposed rules on small businesses, presuming each of these factors to be adverse to small business.
- Clarifying present statutes on hearings and agency responses to submitted lower cost regulatory alternatives, and conforming other provisions to these changes.

The statutory requirements for preparing a SERC are revised by:

- Authorizing an agency to respond to a lower cost regulatory alternative by modifying a proposed rule to substantially reduce estimated regulatory costs and requiring the agency to revise its SERC and include a summary of the revised SERC in subsequent rulemaking notices.
- Requiring an agency to provide the rules ombudsman with any revised SERC.
- Making publication of the SERC a mandatory element of the preparation of a SERC.
- Revising the impacts and costs agencies must evaluate when preparing a SERC.

The bill requires an agency to make publicly available on a website a SERC, a revised SERC, a compliance economic review, or an estimate of a regulatory cost or economic impact, for certain rules and proposed rules. The bill also provides that a petition to establish a community development district must include a statement on the prospective economic impact of a community development district, and not a SERC.

The bill may result in a fiscal impact to the state. See FISCAL COMMENTS.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Agency Rulemaking

A rule is an agency statement of general applicability interpreting, implementing, or prescribing law or policy, including the procedure and practice requirements of an agency, as well as certain types of forms.¹ The Administrative Procedure Act (APA)² provides specific requirements agencies must follow in order to adopt rules.³ One important aspect of the APA is the emphasis on public notice and opportunity for participation in agency rulemaking.

With some exceptions,⁴ rulemaking begins with an agency publishing a notice of rule development in the Florida Administrative Register (F.A.R.).⁵ If the agency conducts public rule development workshops,⁶ the persons responsible for preparing the draft rule under consideration must be available to explain the proposal and respond to public questions or comments.⁷

Once the final form of the proposed rule is developed (whether the proposal creates a new rule or amends or repeals an existing rule), the agency must publish a notice of the proposed rule before it may be adopted.⁸ The publication of this notice triggers certain deadlines for the rulemaking process.⁹ Each notice must include the full text of the proposed rule and other additional information, such as a summary of the agency's statement of estimated regulatory costs (SERC) and the opportunity for anyone to provide the agency with information pertaining to the SERC or to propose a lower cost regulatory alternative to the proposed rule. The notice must also state the procedure to request a hearing on the proposed rule.¹⁰

At a public rulemaking hearing agency staff must be available to explain the proposed rule and respond to public questions or comments. Material pertaining to the proposed rulemaking submitted to the agency between the date of publishing the notice of proposed rule and the end of the final public hearing must be considered by the agency and made a part of the rulemaking record.¹¹ If a person substantially affected by the proposed rule shows the proceeding does not provide adequate opportunity to protect those interests, and the agency concurs, the agency must suspend the rulemaking proceeding and convene a separate, more formal proceeding, including referring the matter to the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH). Once the separate proceeding concludes the rulemaking proceeding resumes.¹²

¹ Section 120.52(16), F.S.; *Florida Department of Financial Services v. Capital Collateral Regional Counsel-Middle Region*, 969 So. 2d 527, 530 (Fla. 1st DCA 2007).

² Chapter 120, F.S.

³ Section 120.54, F.S.

⁴ Rule repeals do not require initial rule development. Section 120.54(2)(a), F.S. Emergency rulemaking proceeds separately under s. 120.54(4), F.S.

⁵ Section 120.54(2)(a), F.S. The APA is silent on the initial, internal process an agency follows prior to initiating public rule development. *Adam Smith Enterprises, Inc. v. Dept. of Environmental Regulation*, 553 So. 2d 1260, 1265, n. 4 (Fla. 1st DCA 1990).

⁶ An agency must conduct public workshops if so requested in writing by any affected person unless the agency head explains in writing why a workshop is not necessary. Section 120.52(c), F.S.

⁷ Section 120.54(2)(c), F.S.

⁸ Section 120.54(3)(a)1., F.S.

⁹ Persons affected by the proposed rule have 21 days from the date of publication to request a hearing on the proposed rule. Section 120.54(3)(c), F.S. Those wanting to submit a lower cost regulatory alternative to the proposed rule have the same 21 day time limit. Sections 120.54(3)(a)1. and 120.541(1)(a), F.S. The agency must wait at least 28 days from the date of publication before filing the proposed rule for final adoption. Section 120.54(3)(a)2. and (3)(e)1., F.S.

¹⁰ Section 120.54(3)(a)1., F.S.

¹¹ Section 120.54(3)(c)1., F.S.

¹² Section 120.54(3)(c)2., F.S.

Subsequent to the final rulemaking hearing, if the agency makes any substantial change to the proposed rule the agency must provide additional notice and publish a notice of change in the F.A.R. at least 21 days before the rule may be filed for adoption.¹³ If the change increases the regulatory costs of the rule the agency must revise its SERC.¹⁴

Statement of Estimated Regulatory Costs (SERC)

A SERC is an agency estimate of the potential impact of a proposed rule on the public, particularly the potential costs to the public of complying with the rule as well as to the agency and other governmental entities to implement the rule.¹⁵ Agencies are encouraged to prepare a SERC before adopting, amending, or repealing any rule,¹⁶ and are required to prepare a SERC if:

- The proposed rule will have an adverse impact on small businesses;¹⁷
- The proposed rule is likely to directly or indirectly increase aggregate regulatory costs by more than \$200,000 in the first year after the rule is implemented;¹⁸ or
- If a substantially affected person submits a proposal for a lower cost regulatory alternative to the proposed rule. The proposal must substantially accomplish the same objectives in the law being implemented by the agency.¹⁹

Additionally, a SERC must be included in a petition for the creation of a community development district filed with the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission.²⁰

Each SERC at a minimum must contain the following elements:

- An economic analysis of the proposed rule's potential direct or indirect impacts,²¹ including whether any of the following exceed an aggregate of \$1,000,000 in the first 5 years after implementing the rule:
 - Any adverse impact on economic growth, private sector job creation or employment, or private sector investment;²²
 - Any adverse impact on business competitiveness (including the ability to compete with businesses in other states or markets), productivity, or innovation;²³ or
 - Any likely increase in regulatory costs (including transactional costs).²⁴
- A good faith estimate of the number and a general description of the individuals and entities required to comply with the rule.²⁵
- A good faith estimate of the cost of implementing the rule to the agency and any other state or local governmental entities, including any anticipated impacts on state or local revenues.²⁶
- A good faith estimate of the transactional costs members of the public and local governmental entities are likely to incur in order to comply with the rule.²⁷
- An analysis of the impact of the rule on small businesses, including the agency's explanation for not implementing alternatives which could reduce adverse impacts, and of the impact on small counties and small cities.²⁸

¹³ Section 120.54(3)(d)1., F.S.

¹⁴ Section 120.541(1)(c), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 120.541(2), F.S. Beginning in 1975, the APA required agencies to estimate the economic impact of proposed rules or explain why such an estimate could not be prepared. Ch. 75-191, s. 3, LOF, codified at 120.54(1), F.S. (1975).

¹⁶ Section 120.54(3)(b)1., F.S.

¹⁷ Sections 120.54(3)(b)1.a. and 120.541(1)(b), F.S.

¹⁸ Sections 120.54(3)(b)1.b. and 120.541(1)(b), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 120.541(1)(a), F.S. Upon the submission of the lower cost regulatory alternative, the agency must revise its initial SERC, or prepare one if not done previously, and either adopt the proposed alternative or state its reasons for rejecting the proposal.

²⁰ Section 190.005(1), F.S. The exclusive method of establishing a community development district with a size of 1,000 acres or more is pursuant to rule adopted by the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission. The Commission is composed of the Governor and Cabinet. Section 380.07, F.S.

²¹ Section 120.541(2)(a), F.S.

²² Section 120.541(2)(a)1., F.S.

²³ Section 120.541(2)(a)2., F.S.

²⁴ Section 120.541(2)(a)3., F.S.

²⁵ Section 120.541(2)(b), F.S.

²⁶ Section 120.541(2)(c), F.S.

²⁷ Section 120.541(2)(d), F.S. The definition of "transactional costs" is discussed later in this analysis.

- A description of each lower cost regulatory alternative submitted to the agency with a statement adopting the alternative or explaining the reasons for rejection.²⁹

Additional information may be included if the agency determines that it would be useful.³⁰ The agency's failure to prepare a SERC when required or failure to respond to a written proposed lower cost regulatory alternative³¹ is a material failure to follow the APA rulemaking requirements.³² Consequently, if challenged the rule could be found to be an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority.³³ Even when the agency properly prepares a SERC and responds to all proposed lower cost regulatory alternatives, the resulting rule could be challenged as an invalid exercise of delegated legislative authority if the rule imposes regulatory costs greater than a proposed alternative which substantially accomplishes the same result.³⁴

The specific requirements of s. 120.541, F.S., were adopted in 1996 as part of a comprehensive revision of the APA.³⁵ The revisions resulted from the Final Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor to study and recommend improvements to the APA, particularly in rulemaking and making agencies more accountable to the Legislature and the public.³⁶ The Commission found the purpose for economic impact statements was to assist both the government and the public to understand the potential financial impacts of a rule before adoption but "(t)he quality of economic analyses ... prepared by state agencies is inadequate, and existing law requirements ... are ineffective."³⁷

Effect of the Bill

The bill amends the rulemaking procedures of the APA relating to public notices and the preparation of SERCs, beginning with the period of rule development. Agencies are provided specific factors to consider when evaluating the overall impact on small businesses of a proposed rule, amendment, or repeal. The requirement for an agency conducting a public workshop or hearing to make available certain personnel is expanded to include those responsible for preparing the SERC and responding to lower cost regulatory alternatives. The statute controlling the actual preparation of SERCs is revised to

²⁸ Section 120.541(2)(e), F.S. This statute incorporates the definitions of "small city" and "small county" in ss. 120.52(18) & 120.52(19), F.S., respectively. The statute also incorporates the definition of "small business" in s. 288.703, F.S. *Compare*, s. 120.54(3)(b)2., F.S., which uses similar language requiring agencies to consider the impact of every proposed rule, amendment, or repeal on small businesses, small cities, and small counties but also permits agencies to rely on expanded versions of these definitions if necessary to adapt the rule for more specific needs or problems. Section 120.54(3)(b)2.a., F.S., specifies 5 methods agencies must consider to reduce the rule's impact on small businesses, cities, and counties. If the agency determines the rule will affect defined small businesses, notice of the rule must be sent to the rules ombudsman in the Executive Office of the Governor. Section 120.54(3)(b)2.b.(I), F.S. The agency must adopt regulatory alternatives reducing impacts on small businesses timely offered by the rules ombudsman or provide the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee a written explanation for failing to do so. Section 120.54(3)(b)2.b.(II), (III), F.S.

²⁹ Section 120.541(2)(g), F.S.

³⁰ Section 120.541(2)(f), F.S.

³¹ The party submitting a proposal to the agency must designate it as a lower cost regulatory alternative or at a minimum discuss cost issues with the proposed rule in order to inform the agency of the purpose of the submittal. A party challenging the validity of a school board rule argued the board failed to prepare a SERC after receiving a lower cost regulatory alternative. The administrative law judge (ALJ) found the proposal submitted to the board neither referenced s. 120.541, F.S., nor asserted it would result in lower costs. The ALJ ruled the failure to demonstrate the proposal presented a lower cost alternative meant the agency was not informed of the purpose of the submission and thus had a duty to prepare a SERC or respond to a lower cost regulatory alternative. *RHC and Associates, Inc. v. Hillsborough County School Board*, Final Order, DOAH Case no. 02-3138RP at <http://www.doah.state.fl.us/ALJ/searchDOAH/> (accessed Jan. 28, 2014).

³² Section 120.541(1)(e), F.S. Unlike other failures to follow the APA rulemaking requirements, this provision prevents the challenged agency from rebutting the presumed material failure by proving the substantial interests of the petitioner and the fairness of the proceedings were not impaired. Section 120.56(1)(c), F.S. This limitation applies only if the challenge is brought by a substantially affected person within one year from the rule going into effect. Section 120.541(1)(f), F.S.

³³ Section 120.52(8)(a), F.S.

³⁴ Section 120.52(8)(f), F.S. This type of challenge must be to the agency's rejection of a lower cost regulatory alternative and brought by a substantially affected person within a year of the rule going into effect. Section 120.541(1)(g), F.S.

³⁵ Ch.96-159, s. 11, LOF.

³⁶ *Final Report of the Governor's Administrative Procedure Act Review Commission*, 1 (Feb. 20, 1996), at <http://japc.state.fl.us/research.cfm> (accessed March 27, 2014).

³⁷ *Final Report of the Governor's APA Review Commission*, supra at 31.

clarify agency responsibilities for public notice and responding to lower cost regulatory alternatives. A new subsection provides agencies flexibility for obtaining necessary data and increases legislative guidance for evaluating cost impacts by identifying specific cost and economic factors all agencies must consider when preparing a SERC.

Section 120.54(2): Rule Development

The bill conforms the requirement for information in a notice of rule development³⁸ with that required for a notice of proposed rule.³⁹ In notices of rule development, agencies will be required to provide citations to the grant of rulemaking authority and the specific law(s) being implemented under which the proposed rule will be developed⁴⁰ and:

- Information on how the public may comment on the proposed rule development and provide the agency with information on regulatory costs which may result from a proposed rule; and
- How the public may, without cost, access online a draft of the rule being developed (when available).

Agencies conducting public rule development workshops⁴¹ will be required to ensure the attendance at such workshops not only of the people responsible for preparing the proposed rule but also those responsible for preparing the SERC to receive public input, explain the agency's proposal, and respond to public questions or comments. The bill deletes a sentence stating an agency's failure to provide the agency head's written explanation as to why a requested workshop was not necessary "may be a material error" in the rulemaking procedure because the statement is redundant of s. 120.56(1)(c), F.S.

Section 120.54(3): Rule Adoption

The bill makes several changes to the requirement for notices of proposed rules:⁴²

- Additional information must be included in the published notice of proposed rule:⁴³
 - The notice must state whether the agency held a public workshop for rule development, and, if not, whether the agency received a written request to conduct a workshop.
 - If the agency received a written request but did not conduct a workshop, whether the agency head provided a written explanation as to why the workshop was unnecessary.
 - The required summary of the SERC (if one is prepared) must include a hyperlink to a copy of the SERC on the agency's website.
- An agency will have the option of providing additional copies of a published notice of proposed rule by mail or electronic delivery to those who requested advance notice of the agency's proceedings.⁴⁴

In lieu of filing physical copies of a required statement or copy of additional material incorporated by reference in the proposed rule,⁴⁵ the agency may provide the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee (JAPC)⁴⁶ access to a copy of these materials by hyperlink to a webpage on the agency's website.

The bill provides that a rule will be presumed to have an adverse impact, and a SERC will be required, if for any small business:

- The owner or other specified person must complete any education, training or testing, is likely to expend 10 or more hours, or must hire a professional, in order to understand and comply with the rule in the first year.
- Taxes or fees assessed on transactions are likely to increase by at least \$500 in the aggregate in one year due to the rule.

³⁸ Section 120.54(2)(a), F.S.

³⁹ Section 120.54(3)(a)1., F.S.

⁴⁰ Staff of JAPC suggested conforming the notice of rule development to the present requirements for notices of proposed rule. Adding statutory citations at the initiation of rulemaking will help define the scope of rule development. It therefore can guide and assist public participation.

⁴¹ Section 120.54(2)(c), F.S.

⁴² Section 120.54(3)(a), F.S.

⁴³ Section 120.54(3)(a)1., F.S.

⁴⁴ Section 120.54(3)(a)3., F.S.

⁴⁵ Section 120.54(1)(i)1., 2., and 3., F.S.

⁴⁶ Section 120.54(3)(a)4., F.S.

- Prices charged for goods and services are restricted or likely to increase due to the rule.
- Compliance with the rule will require specially trained, licensed, or tested employees.
- Operating costs are expected to increase by \$100,000 annually because of the rule.
- Compliance requires capital expenditures of at least \$1,000.

Consistent with the revised requirements for rule development workshops, agencies will be required to ensure the availability at hearings on proposed rules both of those responsible for preparing the proposed rule and those responsible for preparing the SERC. Those made available must be able to explain the proposed rule and the SERC and respond to public questions or comments about the proposed rule, SERC, and the agency's decision whether to adopt offered lower cost regulatory alternatives.

An agency deciding to commence a requested separate, more formal proceeding⁴⁷ will be required to publish notice of that proceeding in the F.A.R. The bill expressly tolls all timelines under the standard rulemaking procedures during the suspension of the rulemaking proceeding until the date following the conclusion of the separate proceeding.

An agency's notice of change to a proposed rule will be required to include:

- A summary of the SERC prepared as a consequence of the change to the proposed rule;
- A summary of the revision to the SERC required by s. 120.541(1)(c), F.S.; or
- A statement the proposed rule as changed does not require preparation of a SERC.

In addition to technical changes conforming other statutory provisions to these changes, the bill requires agencies to make a SERC available to the public at a readily accessible page on the agency's website.⁴⁸

Section 120.541: Statements of Estimated Regulatory Costs

The bill expressly provides for the submission of lower cost regulatory alternatives in response to any non-technical noticed change to the proposed rule. Submissions of lower cost regulatory alternatives responding to notices of change will only be in good faith if the person submitting the alternative notes the reason for believing the change creates increased regulatory costs or an adverse effect on small businesses that was not created by the original proposed rule.

An agency receiving a proposed lower cost regulatory alternative will now have the choice of modifying the proposed rule to substantially reduce regulatory costs in addition to either adopting the proposal or stating its reasons for rejecting the alternative in favor of the proposed rule. If the rule is modified, the agency also must revise the SERC. If the agency rejects the alternative proposal or modifies the proposed rule, the agency must state its reasons for rejecting the alternative proposal in favor of the proposed or modified rule. When a SERC is revised because a change to a proposed rule increases the projected regulatory costs or the agency modified the rule in response to a lower cost regulatory alternative, a summary of the revised SERC must be included in subsequent published rulemaking notices. Under the bill, the revised SERC must be provided to the rules ombudsman⁴⁹, in addition to the party submitting the lower cost regulatory alternative and JAPC, and must be published in the same manner as the original SERC.

The bill revises the guidance on which agencies must rely when preparing SERCs. The definition and use of "transactional" costs is replaced with more specific terms.

The required economic analysis must analyze the proposed rule's impact on regulatory costs, which includes all costs and impacts estimated in the SERC. The agency must estimate the number of small businesses and other entities required to comply with the proposed rule, in addition to individuals. The SERC must estimate the costs of compliance by individuals and entities.

⁴⁷ Section 120.54(3)(c)2., F.S.

⁴⁸ Section 120.54(3)(e)2., F.S.

⁴⁹ The rule ombudsman is appointed by the Governor and located in the Executive Office of the Governor. Section 288.7015, F.S.

The bill creates s. 120.541(1)(h), F.S., requiring an agency to make publicly available on its website, or a website established for publication of administrative law records, the following documents for a rule until the rule to which the document applies is withdrawn or repealed, or until the rule is amended accompanied by the preparation of a new SERC:

- A SERC prepared with respect to a rule proposed or filed for adoption after November 16, 2010;
- A revision of a SERC prepared with respect to a rule proposed or filed for adoption after November 16, 2010;
- A compliance economic review published pursuant to s. 120.745(5), F.S.; or
- A report on an economic estimate of regulatory costs and economic impact published pursuant to s. 120.745(9)(b), F.S.

The bill creates s. 120.541(5)(a), F.S., requiring agencies to estimate all impacts and costs for the first five years after full implementation of all provisions of the rule, not simply from the effective date of the proposed rule.

The bill also creates s. 120.541(5)(b), F.S., requiring estimates of economic, market and small business impacts likely to result from compliance with the proposed rule to consider elements such as:

- Increased or decreased consumer prices or value of goods and services;
- Increased costs due to obtaining substitute or alternative products or services;
- The value of time expended by business owners and other business personnel to comply with the proposed rule;
- Capital costs incurred to comply with the proposed rule; and
- Other impacts suggested by the rules ombudsman, the agency head's appointing authority, or interested persons.

The bill creates s. 120.541(5)(c), F.S., providing agencies with specific guidance and flexibility for obtaining information and data necessary to prepare economic analyses. Newly created s. 120.541(5)(d), F.S., directs agencies to consider all direct and indirect costs of rule compliance and provides 18 specific types of costs as examples, including:

- Filing fees;
- Costs of obtaining a license;
- Costs to obtain, install, and maintain equipment necessary for compliance;
- Costs related to accounting, financial, information, and management systems;
- Labor costs;
- Costs of education, training, and testing necessary for compliance; and
- Allocation of administrative and other overhead.

Section 190.005: Community Development Districts

The bill provides that a petition for the establishment of a community development district filed with the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission need not contain a SERC, but rather must contain a statement explaining the prospective economic impact of the establishment of the proposed district.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Amends s. 120.54, F.S., revising rulemaking notice, workshop, and hearing requirements, updating publication requirements to include internet access to certain documents, creating specific guidance for agency evaluation of prospective adverse impacts on small businesses by new rules, clarifying requirements for responding to lower cost regulatory alternatives, makes necessary conforming changes.

Section 2: Amends s. 120.541, F.S., revising and expanding agency responsibilities in preparing SERCs and responding to submitted lower cost regulatory alternatives, requiring provision of revised SERCs to the rules ombudsman, creating s. 120.541(5), F.S., extensively revising the impacts and costs agencies must evaluate when preparing a SERC, providing specific guidance on discrete types of costs and economic impacts necessary for more thorough and useful information on the impact of a proposed rule.

Section 3: Amends s. 190.005, F.S., requiring a petition to establish a community development district to include a statement explaining the prospective economic impact of the establishment of a proposed district.

Section 4: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state government. See FISCAL COMMENTS.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill is expected to provide a better estimation of economic impacts of agency rules, a better opportunity for local government and private entities to participate in rulemaking and in estimating regulatory costs with the clear intent to better facilitate the selection of lower cost alternatives. In addition, more complete estimates of regulatory costs and economic impacts may bring more agency rules under the scrutiny of legislative ratification prior to their becoming effective.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

State agencies currently are required to comply with notice, publication, and hearing requirements for rulemaking and with the requirements for preparing SERCs. The bill adds to these requirements. Compliance with these additional requirements may require agencies to devote more resources to rulemaking. The bill also specifically provides for electronic and internet provision of many documents that must currently be delivered in paper form. This might result in cost savings to some agencies.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill does not create any additional rulemaking authority.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

Other Comments: Website Posting of a SERC

The bill requires an agency to make publicly available on a website a SERC, a revised SERC, a compliance economic review, or a report on an economic estimate of regulatory costs and economic impact, until the rule is withdrawn or repealed, or until the rule is amended with preparation of a new SERC. It is unclear what the effect of this requirement is for a proposed rule that is revised to no longer require a SERC or other economic impact report.

Other Comments: Economic Impact on Economic Growth, Employment, Small Businesses

The bill provides that an agency evaluating the potential impact of a rule on economic growth, employment, private sector investment, and small businesses must consider factors such as increased customer charges for goods and services, decreased market value of goods and services, increased costs resulting from the purchase of substitute or alternative products or services, and value of time required for understanding and compliance of the rule. It is unclear if an agency would have the ability to develop meaningful estimates of such factors without access to reliable data, which may not be available.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

At its meeting of February 5, 2014, the Rulemaking Oversight & Repeal Subcommittee adopted two amendments to the draft PCB and approved PCB RORS 14-02 as amended.

- Amendment 1 made a technical change clarifying the purpose of a rule development workshop, if conducted by an agency, includes obtaining information for the preparation of a statement of estimated regulatory costs. The amendment further clarified the current statutory provision: an agency must conduct a rule development workshop only if so requested in writing, unless the agency head explains in writing why a workshop is not necessary.
- Amendment 2 made a technical change clarifying the authority for agencies to provide JAPC an electronic hyperlink to readily accessible copies of all statements and materials required to be filed with the committee before a proposed rule may be filed for adoption, in lieu of filing physical copies of such documents.

On March 31, 2014, the Government Operations Subcommittee adopted three amendments to the bill and reported it favorably as a committee substitute. The amendments:

- Clarified that an agency must provide information on how to submit comments on a proposed rule or information regarding potential regulatory costs even when the preliminary text of proposed rules is provided.
- Provided that a petition to establish a community development district must include a statement explaining the prospective economic impact of the establishment of the proposed district instead of a SERC.
- Required each agency to post on a website a SERC or revised SERC, a compliance economic review, or an estimate of a regulatory cost or economic impact, for certain rules and proposed rules.

On April 11, 2014, the State Affairs Committee adopted one amendment to the bill and reported it favorably as a committee substitute. The amendment provided that if an agency receives a lower cost regulatory alternative to a proposed rule from a substantially affected person, and the agency modifies the proposed rule or rejects the alternative proposal, the agency must provide a statement of the reasons for rejecting the alternative proposal in favor of the proposed or modified rule.

This analysis is drafted to the committee substitute as adopted by the State Affairs Committee.

