

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government

BILL: SB 514

INTRODUCER: Senator Stargel

SUBJECT: Fees of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation

DATE: March 28, 2017

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Kraemer</u>	<u>McSwain</u>	<u>RI</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Davis</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AGG</u>	Pre-meeting
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

I. Summary:

SB 514 sets the amount that a professional practice board may impose on a delinquent status licensee as a delinquency fee to \$25. Under current law, the delinquency fee for a profession regulated by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) may not exceed the amount of the biennial renewal fee for an active status license.

The bill reduces from 1.5 percent to 1.0 percent, the surcharge assessed on building permit fees which is transferred to the DBPR to administer and carry out the purposes of the Florida Building Code. Under current law, the surcharge is allocated to fund the Florida Building Commission, the Florida Building Code Compliance and Mitigation Program, and the Florida Fire Prevention Code informal interpretations managed by the State Fire Marshal.

The bill reduces the revenues deposited into the DBPR's Professional Regulation Trust Fund by approximately \$3.3 million annually and the General Revenue Fund by \$263,000 annually. Local governments are expected to lose about \$300,000 annually in building permit surcharge revenues that the local governments are permitted to retain.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2017.

II. Present Situation:

Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Section 20.165, F.S., establishes the organizational structure of the DBPR; the DBPR has 12 divisions:

- Administration;
- Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco;
- Certified Public Accounting;

- Drugs, Devices, and Cosmetics;
- Florida Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes;
- Hotels and Restaurants;
- Pari-mutuel Wagering;
- Professions;
- Real Estate;
- Regulation;
- Service Operations; and
- Technology.

Fifteen boards and programs exist within the Division of Professions,¹ two boards are within the Division of Real Estate,² and one board exists in the Division of Certified Public Accounting.³ The Florida State Boxing Commission is assigned to the DBPR for administrative and fiscal accountability purposes only.⁴ The DBPR also administers the Child Labor Law and Farm Labor Contractor Registration Law pursuant to parts I and III of ch. 450, F.S.

Chapter 455, F.S., applies to the regulation of professions constituting “any activity, occupation, profession, or vocation regulated by the DBPR in the Divisions of Certified Public Accounting, Professions, Real Estate, and Regulation.”⁵

Under Florida law, regulation of professions is undertaken “only for the preservation of the health, safety, and welfare of the public under the police powers of the state.”⁶ Regulation is required when:

- The potential for harming or endangering public health, safety, and welfare is recognizable and outweighs any anticompetitive impact that may result;
- The public is not effectively protected by other state statutes, local ordinances, federal legislation, or other means; and
- Less restrictive means of regulation are not available.⁷

However, “neither the department nor any board may create a regulation that has an unreasonable effect on job creation or job retention,” or a regulation that unreasonably restricts the ability of those who desire to engage in a profession or occupation to find employment.⁸

¹ Section 20.165(4)(a), F.S., establishes the following boards and programs which are noted with the implementing statutes: Board of Architecture and Interior Design, part I of ch. 481; Florida Board of Auctioneers, part VI of ch. 468; Barbers’ Board, ch. 476; Florida Building Code Administrators and Inspectors Board, part XII of ch. 468; Construction Industry Licensing Board, part I of ch. 489; Board of Cosmetology, ch. 477; Electrical Contractors’ Licensing Board, part II of ch. 489; Board of Employee Leasing Companies, part XI of ch. 468; Board of Landscape Architecture, part II of ch. 481; Board of Pilot Commissioners, ch. 310; Board of Professional Engineers, ch. 471; Board of Professional Geologists, ch. 492; Board of Veterinary Medicine, ch. 474; Home Inspection Services Licensing Program, part XV of ch. 468; and Mold-related Services Licensing Program, part XVI of ch. 468, F.S.

² See s. 20.165(4)(b), F.S. Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board, created under part II of ch. 475, F.S., and Florida Real Estate Commission, created under part I of ch. 475, F.S.

³ See s. 20.165(4)(c), F.S., which establishes the Board of Accountancy, created under ch. 473, F.S.

⁴ Section 548.003(1), F.S.

⁵ Section 455.01(6), F.S.

⁶ Section 455.201(2), F.S.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Section 455.201(4)(b), F.S.

Chapter 455, F.S., provides the general powers of the DBPR and sets forth the procedural and administrative framework for all of the professional boards housed under the DBPR as well as the Divisions of Certified Public Accounting, Professions, Real Estate, and Regulation.⁹ When a person is authorized to engage in a profession or occupation in Florida, the DBPR issues a “permit, registration, certificate, or license” to the licensee.¹⁰

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, the Division of Certified Public Accounting had 39,216 licensees, the Division of Real Estate had 349,668 licensees, and the Board of Professional Engineers had 61,396 licensees.¹¹ In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, there were 434,001 licensees in the Division of Professions,¹² including:

- Architects and interior designers;
- Asbestos consultants and contractors;
- Athlete agents;
- Auctioneers;
- Barbers;
- Building code administrators and inspectors;
- Community association managers;
- Construction industry contractors;
- Cosmetologists;
- Electrical contractors;
- Employee leasing companies;
- Geologists;
- Home inspectors;
- Landscape architects;
- Harbor pilots;
- Mold-related services;
- Talent agencies; and
- Veterinarians.¹³

The Division of Florida Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes (FCTMH) within the DBPR provides consumer protection for Florida residents living in regulated communities through education, complaint resolution, mediation and arbitration, and developer disclosure.¹⁴ The FCTMH has limited regulatory authority over the following business entities and individuals:

- Condominium Associations;

⁹ See s. 455.203, F.S. The DBPR must also provide legal counsel for boards within the DBPR by contracting with the Department of Legal Affairs, by retaining private counsel, or by providing DBPR staff counsel. See s. 455.221(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Sections 455.01(4) and (5), F.S.

¹¹ See Department of Business and Professional Regulation, *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2015-2016*, at http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/os/documents/ProfessionsAnnualReportFY2015-2016_Final.pdf, (last visited Mar. 10, 2017) at page 21.

¹² Of the total 415,207 licensees in the Division of Professions, 23,183 are inactive. *Id.* at page 22.

¹³ *Id.* at pages 21-22.

¹⁴ Department of Business and Professional Regulation, *Division of Florida condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes*, <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/lsc/index.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2017).

- Cooperative Associations;
- Florida Mobile Home Parks and related associations;
- Vacation Units and Timeshares;
- Yacht and Ship Brokers and related business entities; and
- Homeowner's Associations (jurisdiction is limited to arbitration of election and recall disputes).¹⁵

Sections 455.203 and 455.213, F.S., establish general licensing authority for the DBPR, including the authority to charge license fees and license renewal fees. Each board within the DBPR must determine by administrative rule¹⁶ the amount of license fees for each profession, based on estimates of the required revenue to implement the regulatory laws affecting the profession.¹⁷

A licensee may practice a profession only if the licensee has an active status license.¹⁸ Generally, most licensees who practice a profession without an active status license¹⁹ are subject to the imposition of discipline, fines, or assessments as described in s. 455.227, F.S. At least 90 days before the end of a licensure cycle, the DBPR must provide a licensure renewal notification to an active or inactive licensee, and a notice of pending cancellation of licensure to a delinquent status licensee.²⁰

Each board, or the department when there is no board (board),²¹ must permit a licensee to choose active or inactive status at the time of licensure renewal, and impose a fee for an inactive status license that does not exceed the fee for an active status license.²² An inactive status licensee may change to active status at any time, if the licensee meets all requirements for active status, including payment of all required fees, and meeting all continuing education requirements. Failure of a licensee to renew a license before its expiration causes the license to become delinquent in the license cycle following expiration (delinquency cycle).²³

A delinquent status licensee must re-apply for active or inactive status during the delinquency cycle. Failure by a delinquent status licensee to become active or inactive before the expiration of the delinquency cycle renders the license void, with no further action by the board.²⁴

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ The administrative rules of the DBPR and of each Board are available through the DBPR's website at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/divisions.html> (last visited Mar. 10, 2017).

¹⁷ Section 455.219(1), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 455.271(1), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 455.271, F.S., on inactive and delinquent status of licenses, does not apply to a business establishment registered, permitted, or licensed by the department to do business or to a person licensed, permitted, registered, or certified pursuant to ch. 310, F.S. on Pilots, Piloting, and Pilotage, or ch. 475, F.S., on Real Estate Brokers, Sales Associates, Schools, and Appraisers.

²⁰ *See* s. 455.273, F.S.

²¹ Whenever a board for a profession does not exist, the DBPR is generally authorized by law to act instead. *See* e.g., ss. 455.219 and 455.271, F.S., for multiple references to actions of "the board, or the department when there is no board."

²² The status or a change in status of a licensee does not alter the board's right to impose discipline or to enforce discipline previously imposed on a licensee for acts or omissions committed by the licensee while holding a license, whether active, inactive, or delinquent. *See* s. 455.271(11), F.S.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

The DBPR may, at its discretion, reinstate a license that has become void (excepting those public accountancy licenses issued under ch. 473, F.S.) if the DBPR determines that the individual failed to comply because of illness or economic hardship. The individual must apply to the DBPR for reinstatement, pay all required fees, including a reinstatement fee, meet all continuing education requirements, and otherwise be eligible for renewal of licensure.²⁵

Section 455.271(7), F.S., provides that each board must impose an additional delinquency fee, not to exceed the biennial renewal fee for an active status license, when a delinquent status licensee applies for active or inactive status. Currently, all boards have adopted delinquency fees, which vary by profession and range, from \$25 to \$260.

Florida Building Code and Building Permit Surcharge

Part IV of ch. 553, F.S., is known as the “Florida Building Codes Act (Act).” The purpose and intent of the Act is to provide a mechanism for the uniform adoption, updating, amendment, interpretation, and enforcement of a single, unified state building code. The Florida Building Code must be applied, administered, and enforced uniformly and consistently from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It is the intent of the Legislature that local governments have the power to inspect all buildings, structures, and facilities within their jurisdictions in protection of the public’s health, safety, and welfare. Under current law, counties and local enforcement agencies have authority to enforce the Florida Building Code and issue building permits.

Section 553.721, F.S., requires that all local building departments assess and collect a 1.5 percent surcharge on any building permit issued by their agency for the purpose of enforcing the Florida Building Code. The surcharge assessment is paid directly by the individual or construction professional pulling the permit and is generally passed on to consumers through increased costs for construction. The local jurisdictions collect the assessment and remit the surcharge fees to the DBPR to fund the activities of the Florida Building Commission and the DBPR’s Office of Codes and Standards. Local building departments are permitted to retain 10 percent of the surcharge amount they collect to fund participation of their agencies in the national and state building code adoption processes and to provide education related to enforcement of the Florida Building Code.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 455.271, F.S., to require a \$25 delinquency fee be imposed on delinquent status professional licensees, in lieu of the delinquency fee authorized under current law, which may not exceed the amount of the biennial renewal fee for an active status license.

Section 2 amends s. 553.721, F.S., to reduce from 1.5 percent to 1.0 percent, the surcharge assessed on permit fees assessed for the DBPR to administer and carry out the purposes of the Florida Building Code.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2017.

²⁵ *Id.*

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The DBPR indicates SB 514 will reduce professional licensure expenditures due to delinquency fees, which will be limited to \$25 for each delinquent licensee, and that expenditures associated with the payment of fees for a building permit will be reduced.²⁶

C. Government Sector Impact:

The DBPR estimates there will be a recurring reduction in delinquency fee and building permit fee revenues of approximately \$3,290,233 beginning in Fiscal Year 2017-2018. There will be a corresponding recurring reduction in the eight percent service charge sent to the General Revenue Fund of approximately \$263,233 beginning in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.²⁷

Delinquency Fee and Building Permit Surcharge Reductions

	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20
Delinquency Fee Revenue Reduction:	(680,060)	(680,060)	(680,060)
Building Permit Surcharge Reduction	<u>(2,610,355)</u>	<u>(2,610,355)</u>	<u>(2,610,355)</u>
Total Delinquency Fee and Surcharge Reduction	(3,290,415)	(3,290,415)	(3,290,415)
8% Surcharge to GR Reduction	(263,233)	(263,233)	(263,233)

Local Government Impact

In addition, the DBPR estimates local building departments will experience a reduction in surcharge revenues they are permitted to retain based on the lower amount of surcharge assessed against each building permit. The estimated loss of revenue to cities and

²⁶ See 2017 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis (AGENCY: Department of Business and Professional Regulation) for SB 514, dated Feb. 28, 2017, (on file with Senate Committee on Regulated Industries) at page 4.

²⁷ *Id.*

counties will be approximately \$290,039 in Fiscal Year 2017-2018 and the same amount in Fiscal Year 2018-19 and Fiscal Year 2019-2020.²⁸

Cities and Counties Revenue Reductions

	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20
10% fee Collected by Locals based on 1.5% Surcharge (Current law)	870,118	870,118	870,118
10% fee Collected by Local based on 1% Surcharge (with reduction)	580,079	580,079	580,079
Net Reduction to Cities and Counties	(290,039)	(290,039)	(290,039)

The DBPR indicates the cost of modifications to software to address fee configurations for each affected profession could be minimized by authorizing such changes to occur as part of a profession’s renewal cycle, but these modifications can be accomplished using existing resources.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 455.271 and 553.721.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.

²⁸ *Id.*