
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 619

AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSION ON CONNECTICUT'S FUTURE.

SUMMARY:

This bill reactivates a dormant economic development advisory commission, changes its name, expands its membership, and broadens its charge to include policies encouraging defense contractors and subcontractors to engage in environmentally sustainable and civilian product manufacturing.

It requires the reactivated commission to prepare a report addressing several issues, including some the current commission addressed in its 1993 five-year economic renewal plan. Under the bill, the commission must address workforce development and defense diversification or conversion issues in the report, which the commission must submit to the governor and Commerce Committee by December 1, 2014.

The reactivated commission must perform the same advisory and analytical duties its predecessor must perform under current law, including preparing and reviewing short- and long-term defense conversion strategies. In devising these strategies, the commission must emphasize environmentally sustainable and civilian product manufacturing.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

REACTIVATED COMMISSION

The bill reactivates the Connecticut Commission on Business Opportunity, Defense Diversification and Industrial Policy and renames it the Commission on Connecticut's Future. In doing so, it expands and changes its membership.

The bill adds two representatives of manufacturing unions, which must be recommended by the AFL-CIO president and appointed by the governor. It also changes two legislative appointments. It requires the House majority leader to appoint a representative of a peace organization instead of a representative of a large service-related industry. And it requires the Senate minority leader to appoint a representative of an environmental organization instead of a representative of a small service-related business.

All of the non ex officio members serve two-year terms, starting July 1, 2013. The terms of the current non ex officio members expire June 30, 2013.

The commission's chairperson, whom the governor continues to appoint, must call the commission's first meeting by October 1, 2013. Subsequent meetings are held at the chairperson's discretion.

The current commission consists of the DECD, labor, education, and higher education commissioners; the chairpersons and ranking members of the Commerce Committee; the presidents of the AFL-CIO, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, and the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering; and representatives of different business sectors appointed by legislative leaders. The governor appoints the commission's chairperson from among its members. Like its predecessor, the commission remains within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for administrative purposes.

REPORT

The bill requires the reactivated commission to prepare a report addressing most of the same issues its predecessor addressed in its 1993 plan. Like the plan, the report must lay out a strategy for restoring the manufacturing sector and stimulating its growth, with the goal of increasing the number of manufacturing jobs within five years after the commission completes the report. It must also propose strategies for retaining or expanding the state's economic base and coordinate its economic development policies with public and private

sector capital investment.

The bill does not require the report to address the need for regional approaches to economic development, as current law requires the plan to do. But it requires it to include strategies for:

1. aligning the state's educational institutions with the state's manufacturing base and
2. diversifying or converting defense-related industries to other nonmilitary products, emphasizing environmentally sustainable and civilian product manufacturing.

The commission must submit the report to the governor and Commerce Committee by December 1, 2014.

OTHER DUTIES

The bill transfers the current commission's duties to the reactivated commission, requiring it to:

1. advise the legislature and DECD about defense conversion, industrial policy, and the state's business climate;
2. evaluate bills related to the state's economy, particularly as they affect manufacturers and defense-related businesses;
3. prepare and review strategies being implemented to help defense-dependent businesses convert from making defense to nondefense products;
4. provide a forum for business issues;
5. foster opportunities for public-private partnerships; and
6. stimulate and review public and private assistance to improve the state's economy.

The bill expands two of these requirements. It requires the commission to (1) prepare and review defense conversion strategies that emphasize environmentally sustainable and civilian product

manufacturing and (2) provide forums on business issues that encourage the public to participate.

BACKGROUND

Commission's 1993 Report

The Commission on Business Opportunity, Defense Diversification and Industrial Policy submitted its five-year strategy to the governor and legislature in January 1993. The strategy consisted of four short-term recommendations for stemming the loss of jobs and talent and six long-term recommendations for preparing the state for future growth.

The short-term recommendations focused on promoting entrepreneurship and exporting; broadening the state's economic base, focusing particularly on ways to diversify its defense sector; and supporting job training and retraining. The long-term recommendations focused on improving the state's business climate, promoting educational innovation, supporting and encouraging research and development and technology transfer, reforming tax and regulatory policies, improving the network for delivering economic development services, and stimulating community economic development.

Related Bills

Several bills concern economic development planning. sSB 3, which was favorably reported by the Commerce Committee, requires DECD to prepare and annually update a plan identifying the state's emerging business sectors. SB 943 (File 71) eliminates many procedural and content requirements for preparing the state's strategic development plan. sHB 5460, which was favorably reported by the Commerce Committee, requires DECD to develop a plan to help bioscience and pharmaceutical businesses grow in southeastern Connecticut.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/21/2013)

