
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 943

AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE STATE ECONOMIC STRATEGIC PLAN.

SUMMARY:

This bill shortens the timeframe for the state's economic development strategic plan and eliminates many procedural and content requirements for preparing it. By law, the plan is prepared by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), in consultation with several specified state and quasi-public agencies.

The bill shortens the plan's timeframe from five to four years and extends the deadline for the next plan. DECD submitted the first plan in 2009 and, under current law, must submit the next plan by July 1, 2014. Under the bill, DECD must submit the next plan by July 1, 2015, and every four years thereafter.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

PROCEDURAL CHANGES

The bill makes changes to the process for preparing, approving, and revising the plan. It eliminates the requirements that the commissioner must, when preparing the plan:

1. consult with regional councils of governments; regional planning organizations; regional economic development agencies; interested state and local officials; community and economic development entities; stakeholders; and business, economic, labor, community, and housing organizations; and
2. consider regional economic, community, and housing development plans and applicable state and local workforce investment strategies.

The bill also eliminates a requirement specifying how the commissioner must involve the public in the planning process. Current law specifically requires her to do so by hosting public forums. The bill eliminates this requirement and instead simply requires her to provide for public input.

After completing the planning process, current law requires the commissioner to submit the plan first to the governor for approval and then to the legislature. The bill eliminates the requirement that she must submit the plan to the governor, who, under current law, has 60 days to approve or disapprove it or allow it to be approved without acting on it.

Lastly, the bill eliminates a (1) provision allowing the commissioner to revise and update the plan, with the governor's approval and (2) requirement that she post the revisions on DECD's website.

CONTENT CHANGES

The bill eliminates many provisions that specify the plan's content. Those provisions specify general topics (e.g., review and evaluation of the state's economy) and how they must be addressed (e.g., sectoral analysis, housing market and housing affordability analysis, etc.). The bill (1) eliminates some topics and the specifications for how they must be addressed and (2) keeps others, but for some, eliminates the specifications for addressing them.

Eliminated Topics

The bill eliminates the requirement that the plan review and evaluate the state's economic development structure, including:

1. a review and analysis of (a) past and current economic, community, and housing development structures, budgets, and policies, and (b) the efforts, and responsibilities of the structures' constituent parts; and
2. an analysis of the extent to which these structures and parts (a) meet their obligations, responsibilities, and mandates and (b) contributed to the state's economic development and responsible

growth.

The bill eliminates the requirement that the plan must identify and analyze the state's growing and declining economic clusters (i.e., geographically concentrated and interrelated groups of businesses, universities, and government agencies).

The bill eliminates the requirement that the plan evaluate specific programs and policies. The programs are the urban jobs, enterprise zones, railroad depot zones, manufacturing plant zones, entertainment districts, enterprise corridor zones, and small business assistance innovation research. Under current law, DECD reports on the enterprise zone program and the businesses assisted under the other programs in its annual report (CGS § 32-1m).

Lastly the bill eliminates the requirement that the plan evaluate any responsible growth information the commissioner believes is appropriate.

Eliminated Specifications

The bill retains the other topics, but eliminates the specifications for addressing them. In doing so, the bill allows the commissioner to determine how to address them.

The bill still requires the plan to review and evaluate the state's economy, but eliminates the requirement that it do so by including a sectoral analysis, housing market and housing affordability analysis, labor market analysis and labor quality analysis, demographic analysis, and historic trend analysis and projections.

The bill similarly keeps the requirement that the plan review and analyze the factors, issues, and forces affecting state and regional economic development and responsible growth, but eliminates the list of specific factors, issues, and forces the plan must examine. The factors are: commuter transit, rail and barge freight, technology transfer, brownfield remediation and development, health care delivery and costs, early education, primary education, secondary and postsecondary education systems and student performance, business

regulation, labor force quality and sustainability, social service costs and delivery systems, affordable and workforce housing costs and availability, land use policy, emergency preparedness, taxation, capital availability, and energy costs and supply.

The bill still requires the plan to establish and articulate a vision for the state. Under current law the plan must also identify where the state should be in five, 10, 15, and 20 years. The bill eliminates this five-year horizon interval, allowing the commissioner to choose the point in the future for identifying the state's progress.

Lastly, the bill still requires the plan to (1) establish clear and measureable statewide and regional goals and objectives and (2) specify clear steps and strategies for achieving them, but it eliminates the specific goals and objectives the plan must address. These goals and objectives are: promoting economic development and opportunity; fostering effective access and choice to airports and ports for economic development; enhancing and protecting the environment; maximizing the extent to which the workforce is developed and used consistent with applicable state and local workforce investment strategies; promoting the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed communications; and balancing resources through sound physical development management.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 17 Nay 0 (03/07/2013)