

SUBJECT: Revising the Department of Information Resources (DIR)

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 15 ayes — Solomons, Menendez, Cook, Craddick, Farabee, Gallego, Geren, Harless, Hilderbran, Jones, Lucio, Maldonado, Oliveira, Swinford, S. Turner

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Cindy Reed, Texas Department of Information Resources

BACKGROUND: Government Code, ch. 2054 governs information resources and the Department of Information Resources (DIR). Government Code, ch. 2177 governs electronic commerce and electronic state government procurement.

DIGEST: HB 1705 would make various changes to the Departments of Information Resources and its programs and advisory committees.

The bill would abolish the telecommunications planning and oversight council (TPOC) and transfer to the Department of Information Resources (DIR) the TPOC's responsibilities regarding various telecommunication-related planning, reporting, and oversight activities, including the review of the status of all projects and the financial performance of the state's consolidated telecommunications system and centralized capitol complex telephone system.

HB 1705 also would also make conforming changes related to the regulation of agency solicitation of bids for purchases over \$15,000, which was transferred from the former Texas Building and Procurement Commission (TBPC) to the Comptroller's Office by the 80th Legislature in 2007. It also would repeal Government Code, ch. 2177, which requires DIR to establish an electronic commerce and procurement marketplace and the TBPC to manage the content of the network. It would repeal the

requirement that DIR and the TPBC ensure that small and historically underutilized businesses have access to electronic commerce opportunities.

HB 1705 would revise certain definitions and language related to project management practices and requirements used by agencies in the development of major information technology projects.

The bill would eliminate the requirement that DIR, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), the TPBC, and the CPA prepare a biennial report assessing the current automated information systems of state agencies on how to streamline agencies' reporting on automated information systems. It also would eliminate the requirement that DIR and an interagency panel manage a training program to assist agencies in conducting software audits as well as the requirement that DIR establish and manage an online travel and ticketing service.

HB 1705 would repeal the requirement that DIR establish an information resources technology evaluation center for use by DIR and other state agencies.

The bill would allow DIR to contract with assistance organizations and non-profits receiving state funds through a current state contract or grant to use the consolidated telecommunications system.

HB 1705 would authorize, rather than require, state agencies to report to DIR about their planned technology purchases only if DIR determined the information would benefit the state.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1705 is a streamlining bill that would benefit state agencies and DIR by improving some reporting processes now required of state agencies and eliminating outdated, unnecessary procedures that are currently required. It will increase access to certain DIR services, provide cost-savings options for certain non-profit organizations, and eliminate an outdated advisory committee and other outdated statutes, while improving guidance to state agencies as they develop major information technology projects. It would repeal certain statutory requirements that impose mandates on DIR that are either outdated or cost more than the intended benefits.

It is time to eliminate the TPOC. This committee was established when the telecommunications program was transferred to DIR from what used to be the General Services Commission. Its purpose was to ensure that the DIR board of directors paid proper attention to TEX-AN, the state's telecommunications program. In order to have flexibility and manage more effectively the telecom program, DIR has indicated it will establish in place of TPOC a users group of state and local agency representatives that will provide feedback directly to the contractor managing TEX-AN.

The bill would give state agencies flexibility in certain reporting requirements. Currently, state agencies must report to DIR about their planned technology purchase schedule. The bill would require agencies to report that information to DIR, if DIR requests it, when it would benefit the state in some way.

The bill would eliminate several outdated mandates, including the biennial report required of DIR, the LBB and the State Auditor's Office assessing state agency data collection and reporting. The requirement is burdensome and no longer needed because of improvements in technology and the goals of streamlining data collection have been met.

Other mandates, such as the interagency training program to assist agencies in conducting software audits and managing and purchasing software, are outdated and no longer needed. All agencies have to purchase software from DIR contracts, so purchasing requirements are already being complied with and software audits are conducted by the manufacturers through safeguards built into the software.

Eliminating the information resources technology evaluation center also is necessary because agencies now have their own technology expertise and are able to evaluate software based on their own specific needs and goals. Likewise, current law requires DIR, in consultation with TBPC, to establish and manage the electronic infrastructure for an online travel and ticketing services for state agencies. This service no longer is needed and is not cost-effective because of the availability of similar services through airline, hotel, and other travel-related websites.

The responsibility of managing the electronic procurement marketplace and the electronic commerce network and its content was transferred to the Comptroller's Office in 2007 by the 80th Legislature. The comptroller also is now responsible for ensuring that small and historically

underutilized businesses have maximum access to electronic commerce opportunities, so references to these responsibilities under DIR no longer are necessary.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.