

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 266
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Government Organization
5/14/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Ensuring long-term access to state documents is an open government concern. Proprietary format tends to "rot," and organizations are becoming aware that newer software, even newer versions of the same software, cannot open files created by older software. These concerns create an imperative for the state to adopt open, published file formats for the archiving and creation of documents to ensure that information is accessible over a multi-decade horizon. The state has a vested interest in avoiding vendor lock-in. Proprietary document formats lock the state to particular software providers, and put the state at risk of being unable to access its own documents should those providers go out of business, drop compatibility with their older document formats, or raise prices above the level the state can afford. Adopting published, open standards ensures that multiple providers are available when selecting software products and that, in the eventuality that present software that can access our documents ceases to be available, the ability to read the state's archived documents is not lost due to the proprietary encoding of the documents.

C.S.S.B. 266 relates to the review of information technology systems used by a state agency for compatibility with open standards.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 441.203, Government Code, by adding Subsection (m), as follows:

(m) Requires the records management interagency coordinating council, in cooperation with the Department of Information Resources, to:

(1) review each state agency's existing information technology system to determine whether the system is compatible with open standards; and

(2) consult with and provide assistance to state agencies on:

(A) enhancing the state agency's information technology system to achieve compatibility with open standards where appropriate; and

(B) identifying and recommending information technology systems that are compatible with certain open standards and recognized best practices.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.