

SUBJECT: Review of the process by which state agencies issue permits and licenses

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 12 ayes — Seidlits, T. Hunter, Black, Danburg, Denton, Eckels, Erickson, Goodman, D. Jones, Marchant, Saunders, S. Turner

0 nays

3 absent — Tallas, Wilson, Wolens

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: The Texas Department of Commerce (TDOC) is responsible for helping businesses that want to operate in Texas obtain the necessary permits and licenses. The department is also charged with making recommendations for eliminating, consolidating, simplifying, expediting or improving permit procedures.

DIGEST: HB 1196, as amended, would authorize the state auditor, with the advice and support of TDOC, to implement a business permit review process for all state agencies. The department would complete the implementation of the review process on or before September 1, 1994, and provide all recommended statutory changes as needed to the Legislature on or before January 1, 1995. The bill would take effect September 1, 1993.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1196 could result in an improved and streamlined permit and license application process. Currently, the permit and license process can take a very long time to complete — as long as four years for some environmental permits and licenses. The length of time it takes to obtain permits and licenses impedes business development in the state. Some companies that come to Texas ultimately shut their operations down because of the amount of time it takes to obtain permits and licenses.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition

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NOTES:

The committee amendment would place the state auditor in charge of the study.

SB 750 by Armbrister, identical to HB 1196, passed the Senate on April 29.