

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 96
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Emerging Tech & Eco Dev.
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently in Texas there is no single source for businesses to access license and permit information and requirements for starting a business in the state. Instead, numerous agencies handle business permitting and its processes. For citizens who are starting or maintaining a business, they must obtain services from federal, state, and local governments, as they register the business, determine license requirements, and apply for local permits. These Texas businesspeople who are looking to set up and run businesses in the state are in need of a central and accessible Internet website to learn about requirements, forms, and permits.

The state website, www.TxOnline.com, has proposed to host a business portal that would serve as a "one-stop shopping" source for businesses. This portal would consolidate most of the processes needed in starting and maintaining a business in Texas. This portal could be used for licensing and permit information and for sending and receiving information from businesses doing business with the state. A business portal allows businesses in the state to access license and permit requirements, easily and efficiently. The interactive portal consolidates business information and reduces paperwork by providing a number of services.

S.B. 96 directs the TexasOnline Authority and the Department of Information Resources to develop and maintain a web portal. The portal will provide information and access to necessary resources for starting and maintaining a business in Texas.

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 481.123, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 481.123. DUTIES. Requires the permit office of the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office (permit office) to establish and maintain a website accessible on TexasOnline that performs certain functions.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 481.124, Government Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), (f), and (h) and adding (h-1), as follows:

(a) Authorizes a comprehensive application made on a form prescribed by the permit office to be submitted online through the website maintained by the permit office.

(b) Authorizes the applicant to request assistance through the website maintained by the permit office.

(f) Requires the permit office, upon the applicant's request, to provide application forms to the applicant in an electronic format that enables the applicant to submit the application forms to each state agency through the website maintained by the permit office. Requires a state agency to accept a permit application submitted electronically through the website maintained by the permit office.

(h) Requires the permit liaison officer designated under this subsection to inform the permit office if the application status of an applicant using the comprehensive application procedure changes.

(h-1) Requires the permit office to provide information relating to the status of a permit applicant's applications and take reasonable steps to ensure that the information is accessible only to the applicant. Requires the permit office to regularly update the information.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter H, Chapter 481, Government Code, by adding Section 481.1241, as follows:

Sec. 481.1241. COMMON PERMIT APPLICATION. (a) Requires the permit office to determine what information a state agency generally requires a permit applicant to submit and to adopt and revise a common permit application form on which an applicant may provide the information that the permit office determines is generally required on permit applications.

(b) Requires the permit office to compile in a database the information submitted on the common permit application form. Requires information contained in the database regarding an applicant to be accessible by each state agency that requires the applicant to obtain a permit from the agency for the applicant's business undertaking, project, or activity.

(c) Authorizes an applicant to submit, electronically or by other means, the common permit application form to an agency instead of including the agency's permit application information provided on the common permit application form. Requires an applicant to provide each agency with information required by the agency's permit application that is not contained in the common permit application form.

SECTION 4. Requires the permit office to perform certain tasks by a certain date.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2005.