

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	8 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Conger, Doherty, Esquivel, Hoyle, Johnson, Matthews, Kennemer, Schaufler
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Theresa Van Winkle, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/16, 4/18, 4/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires the Business Development Department to explore the feasibility of establishing a position of the Business Ombudsman. Requires the Department to explore the feasibility of requiring the Ombudsman to provide specific information on a website related to new or prospective small businesses, and methods by which small businesses could ask questions or direct complaints regarding doing business in Oregon. Specifies that such information could be located either on the Department’s website or another state agency’s website. Requires the Department to report to the Legislative Assembly with conclusions on the feasibility study no later than the convening date of the 2013 regular session.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Examples of current ombudsmen in the Executive Branch
- Whether the Business Ombudsman would be an at-will employee
- Level of work the Ombudsman would be performing
- Salary of a circuit court judge
- Effect of regulations on Oregon small businesses
- Current advocacy services for small businesses
- Rationale behind the Ombudsman being appointed instead of being hired
- Items that are to be looked at during the feasibility study process

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Replaces the original measure.

BACKGROUND: House Bill 2770-A directs the Business Development Department (Business Oregon) to explore the feasibility of establishing the position of the Business Ombudsman within state government, in consultation with the Governor’s office and other state agencies. The measure also requires the Department to look at the feasibility of the Ombudsman providing and maintaining information on either the Department’s website or another state agency’s website pertaining to starting and operating a small business in Oregon. Information that is to be contained on the website includes the contact information and description of services for each appropriate state agency or technical provider that provides assistance to or perform regulatory and permitting activities that affect new or prospective small businesses, and methods by which new, prospective, or established businesses can ask questions or direct complaints in doing business in this state, or with public entities located in Oregon.

House Bill 2770-A also requires the Department to report to the Legislative Assembly on its findings no later than the convening date of the 2013 regular session.