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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Brown ORIGINAL DATE 3/3/15 LAST UPDATED _____ HCR 2
SHORT TITLE Web-based Public Comments on Legislation SB _____
ANALYST Leger

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY14	FY15	FY16	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total			Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Concurrent Resolution

House Concurrent Resolution 2 (HCR2) proposes a joint rule to establish a web-based portal through which the public can comment on pending legislation.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The fiscal impact and estimated additional operating budget impact is indeterminate at this time.

HCR 2 tasks the Legislative Council Service (LCS) to develop and maintain a system by which members of the public through an internet-based portal may submit comments on specific pieces of legislation or subjects under consideration by the Legislature at a legislative session.

Expertise likely exists among the LCS information technology staff (IT) to develop such a portal. This project could be done in conjunction with other on-going web projects.

During the legislative session, it is common practice for members of the general public, interest groups, etc. to provide legislators with letters, e-mails, telephone calls, and pamphlets on diverse subject matters. The portal could experience hundreds if not thousands of comments per day. To ensure the portal is maintained, IT may have to dedicate a staff member to oversee the portal, troubleshoot issues, or deal with other issues listed in administrative implications.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The approval by two-thirds of the membership of each house is required for adoption,

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amendment or repeal of joint rule by concurrent resolution applies to HCR 2.

Effective with the second session of the fifty-second legislature (2016; 30-day session), LCS shall develop and maintain a system by which members of the public through an internet-based portal, may submit written comments on specific pieces of legislation or subjects under consideration by the Legislature at a legislative session. In addition to comments, the portal will accept attachments of reasonable length and nature, as determined by the director of the LCS in consultation with the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore.

The portal will allow Legislators and members of the public to access, read, and download comments and sort comments by legislation number, subject and similar criteria.

LCS shall keep public comments on file for thirty days after relevant session.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Although the portal would have the capabilities to serve as a central point for public comment, there is no way to eliminate duplicative efforts separately submitted to Legislators through letters, e-mail, or telephone calls.

It is worth evaluating security efforts to eliminate spam from being submitted to the portal. Consideration should also be given to include a filter program to ensure offensive material is not posted online or made available to the general public.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

HCR 2 states that comments may be submitted on “specific pieces of legislation or subjects”. It is unclear who is responsible for identifying the specific pieces of legislation or subjects in which the portal may be used if not open to all pieces of legislation or subjects under consideration.

JLL/bb