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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1858**

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 10, 2017

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 2.2-1606 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity; certification of small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses.*

Patrons—Lopez, LeMunyon, Anderson, Landes and Peace

Referred to Committee on General Laws

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 2.2-1606 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 2.2-1606. Powers of Director.**

As deemed necessary or appropriate to better fulfill the duties of the Department, the Director may:

1. With the participation of other state departments and agencies, develop comprehensive plans and specific program goals for small, women-owned, and minority-owned business programs; establish regular performance monitoring and reporting systems to assure that goals of state agencies and institutions are being achieved; and evaluate the impact of federal and state support in achieving objectives.

2. Employ the necessary personnel or subcontract, according to his discretion, with localities to supplement the functions of business development organizations.

3. Assure the coordinated review of all proposed state training and technical assistance activities in direct support of small, women-owned, and minority-owned business programs to ensure consistency with program goals and to avoid duplication.

4. Convene, for purposes of coordination, meetings of the heads of departments and agencies, or their designees, whose programs and activities may affect or contribute to the purposes of this chapter.

5. Convene business leaders, educators, and other representatives of the private sector who are engaged in assisting the development of small, women-owned, and minority-owned business programs or who could contribute to their development for the purpose of proposing, evaluating, or coordinating governmental and private activities in furtherance of the objectives of this chapter.

6. Provide the managerial and organizational framework through which joint undertakings with state departments or agencies or private organizations can be planned and implemented.

7. Recommend appropriate legislative or executive actions.

8. Adopt regulations to implement certification programs for small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses and employment services organizations, which regulations shall be exempt from the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) pursuant to subdivision B 2 of § 2.2-4002. Such certification programs shall allow applications for certification to be submitted by electronic means as authorized by § 59.1-496 and the applicant to affix thereto his electronic signature, as defined in § 59.1-480. Such certification programs shall deny certification to vendors from states that deny like certifications to Virginia-based small, women-owned, or minority-owned businesses and employment services organizations or that provide a preference for small, women-owned, or minority-owned businesses and employment services organizations based in that state that is not available to Virginia-based businesses. The regulations shall (i) establish minimum requirements for certification of small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses and employment services organizations; (ii) provide a process for evaluating existing local, state, and private sector, and federal certification programs, as well as certification programs of other states, the District of Columbia, and territories of the United States, that meet the minimum requirements; and (iii) mandate certification, without any additional paperwork, of any prospective state vendor small, women-owned, or minority-owned business that has obtained (a) certification under any federal certification program or (b) certification under any other certification program that is determined to meet the minimum requirements established in the regulations, and of any employment services organization that has been approved by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

9. Establish an interdepartmental board in accordance with § 2.2-1608 to supply the Director with information useful in promoting minority business activity.

INTRODUCED

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