

Department of Planning and Budget

2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB1738

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed

Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron: Carr

3. Committee: Committee Referral Pending

4. Title: Virginia Freedom of Information Act; state public bodies; meetings; virtual public access.

5. Summary: Requires all state public bodies to provide public access to meetings through electronic communication means and to provide the public with the opportunity to comment at such meetings through such the use of such electronic communication means when public comment is customarily received. The bill contains technical amendments.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary- See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: The fiscal impact of this bill is indeterminate. The legislation requires that all public bodies provide public access through electronic communication means, but only agencies that are currently providing videoconferencing need to continue to do so. The legislation also requires that the public have opportunity to comment through these electronic communication means. At this time it is not possible to determine the number of state public bodies that would require implementation of the necessary technology to meet the mandates of this bill. The level and scope of technology that each public body would require is likely to vary across public bodies. The need for technology will differ by public body based on their existing technology and facilities. Due to increased reliance on electronic communication during the pandemic, the requirements of this bill are not anticipated to create a significant fiscal impact for public bodies. The Virginia Information Technologies Agency has provided examples of estimated costs of implementing high quality audio and visual conferencing capabilities for a public body. Full video conferencing setups including labor to install are estimated to cost \$40,000 per set up. Owl video conferencing devices are estimated to cost \$1,200 per device. A Webex Meet annual license is estimated to cost \$174 per license. These costs are purely estimates, and not all public bodies will need this level of audio and visual technology.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: All state public bodies

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None