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Senate Commerce Committee

Testimony Re: SB 179

March 11, 2015

Madam Chairperson and members of the Committee:

The Department of Administration is offering comments today respect to the proposed amendments to the Public Employer and Employee Relations Act (PEERA) set forth in SB 179. The administration of PEERA and the associated processes and procedures is the responsibility of the Department of Labor and the Department of Administration is supportive of the changes proposed by the Department of Labor.

With respect to the impact of the bill, the proposed changes to elections regarding coverage do not affect the State and its agencies. However, the Department of Administration and all state agencies would be impacted by the changes that streamline the Act and the meet and confer process by reducing the topics covered and eliminating several current actions available to labor organizations.

These changes would likely result in savings in the form of staff time currently spent by Human Resources (HR) and Legal staff in agencies with employees covered by PEERA dealing with labor relations issues. The Department of Administration would see even greater savings than other agencies since HR and Legal staff from the Department of Administration coordinate and assist other agencies with these issues.

The exact amount of savings that would be realized by these changes cannot be accurately estimated, as the amount of time spent on the meet and confer or grievance process under PEERA can vary substantially due to the issues and parties involved. However, given past experience with the adoption and extension of Memoranda of Agreements (MOA's) with various labor organizations, the savings resulting from the changes proposed in this bill could be substantial.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Jim Clark
Secretary of Administration