

HCS HB 576 -- SMALL BUSINESS

This bill changes the laws regarding the Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board and the procedures necessary for obtaining judicial review of administrative decisions.

Currently, the board is allowed to conduct hearings and solicit input from business owners regarding government agencies' rules or proposed rules, after which the board provides input to the agencies creating the rules. The bill requires, rather than allows, the board to carry out these functions.

Currently, any person may petition an agency for the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule. The bill requires the agency to submit a written response to these petitions to the board within 60 days of the receipt of the petition. If the agency determines that no change in a rule is needed, any small business affected by the rule may seek a review by the board.

Each agency promulgating a rule that affects small business must submit, every two years, a list of these rules to the General Assembly and the board. The agency must also submit reports explaining why any rule should be continued.

Within 45 days of being notified by the board of a rule that has generated complaints from small businesses, the agency must submit a written response to the board.

Any small business that is adversely affected by a final action of the agency has the right to sue in circuit court for compliance with the procedures specified in the bill. These suits must be commenced within one year of a rule becoming final.

The bill also specifies that if an agency fails to issue a final decision on a contested case within either 60 days after the conclusion of a hearing or within 180 days after the receipt by the agency of a written request for the issuance of a final decision, whichever time is earlier, the person is considered to have exhausted all administrative remedies and is entitled to judicial review in circuit court. The court is allowed to conduct a de novo review of the agency's decision upon application of any party when the action of the agency under review involves only the application of the law to the facts by the agency.