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GOVERNMENT CODE - GOV

TITLE 2. GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA [8000 - 22980] (Title 2 enacted by Stats. 1943, Ch. 134.)

DIVISION 3. EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT [11000 - 15990.3] (Division 3 added by Stats. 1945, Ch. 111.)

PART 1. STATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES [11000 - 11898] (Part 1 added by Stats. 1945, Ch. 111.)

CHAPTER 3.5. Administrative Regulations and Rulemaking [11340 - 11361] (Heading of Chapter 3.5 amended by Stats. 1994, Ch. 1039, Sec. 2.)

ARTICLE 1. General [11340 - 11342.4] (Article 1 added by Stats. 1979, Ch. 567.)

11340. The Legislature finds and declares as follows:

- (a) There has been an unprecedented growth in the number of administrative regulations in recent years.
- (b) The language of many regulations is frequently unclear and unnecessarily complex, even when the complicated and technical nature of the subject matter is taken into account. The language is often confusing to the persons who must comply with the regulations.
- (c) Substantial time and public funds have been spent in adopting regulations, the necessity for which has not been established.
- (d) The imposition of prescriptive standards upon private persons and entities through regulations where the establishment of performance standards could reasonably be expected to produce the same result has placed an unnecessary burden on California citizens and discouraged innovation, research, and development of improved means of achieving desirable social goals.
- (e) There exists no central office in state government with the power and duty to review regulations to ensure that they are written in a comprehensible manner, are authorized by statute, and are consistent with other law.
- (f) Correcting the problems that have been caused by the unprecedented growth of regulations in California requires the direct involvement of the Legislature as well as that of the executive branch of state government.
- (g) The complexity and lack of clarity in many regulations put small businesses, which do not have the resources to hire experts to assist them, at a distinct disadvantage.

(Amended by Stats. 1993, Ch. 870, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 1994.)

11340.1. (a) The Legislature therefore declares that it is in the public interest to establish an Office of Administrative Law which shall be charged with the orderly review of adopted regulations. It is the intent of the Legislature that the purpose of such review shall be to reduce the number of administrative regulations and to improve the quality of those regulations which are adopted. It is the intent of the Legislature that agencies shall actively seek to reduce the unnecessary regulatory burden on private individuals and entities by substituting performance standards for prescriptive standards wherever performance standards can be reasonably expected to be as effective and less burdensome, and that this substitution shall be considered during the course of the agency rulemaking process. It is the intent of the Legislature that neither the Office of Administrative Law nor the court should substitute its judgment for that of the rulemaking agency as expressed in the substantive content of adopted regulations. It is the intent of the Legislature that while the Office of Administrative Law will be part of the executive branch of state government, that the office work closely with, and upon request report directly to, the Legislature in order to accomplish regulatory reform in California.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the California Code of Regulations made available on the Internet by the office pursuant to Section 11344 include complete authority and reference citations and history notes.

(Amended by Stats. 1996, Ch. 501, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 1997.)

11340.2. (a) The Office of Administrative Law is hereby established in state government in the Government Operations Agency. The office shall be under the direction and control of an executive officer who shall be known as the director. There shall also be a deputy director. The director's term and the deputy director's term of office shall be coterminous with that of the appointing power, except that they shall be subject to reappointment.

(b) The director and deputy director shall have the same qualifications as a hearing officer and shall be appointed by the Governor subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 352, Sec. 235. (AB 1317) Effective September 26, 2013. Operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 543 of Ch. 352.)

11340.3. The director may employ and fix the compensation, in accordance with law, of such professional assistants and clerical and other employees as is deemed necessary for the effective conduct of the work of the office.

(Added by Stats. 1979, Ch. 567.)

11340.4. (a) The office is authorized and directed to do the following:

- (1) Study the subject of administrative rulemaking in all its aspects.
- (2) In the interest of fairness, uniformity, and the expedition of business, submit its suggestions to the various agencies.
- (3) Report its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature at the commencement of each general session.

(b) All agencies of the state shall give the office ready access to their records and full information and reasonable assistance in any matter of research requiring recourse to them or to data within their knowledge or control. Nothing in this subdivision authorizes an agency to provide access to records required by statute to be kept confidential.

(Added by Stats. 1995, Ch. 938, Sec. 14. Effective January 1, 1996. Operative July 1, 1997, by Sec. 98 of Ch. 938.)

11340.5. (a) No state agency shall issue, utilize, enforce, or attempt to enforce any guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule, which is a regulation as defined in Section 11342.600, unless the guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule has been adopted as a regulation and filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to this chapter.

(b) If the office is notified of, or on its own, learns of the issuance, enforcement of, or use of, an agency guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule that has not been adopted as a regulation and filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to this chapter, the office may issue a determination as to whether the guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule, is a regulation as defined in Section 11342.600.

(c) The office shall do all of the following:

- (1) File its determination upon issuance with the Secretary of State.
- (2) Make its determination known to the agency, the Governor, and the Legislature.
- (3) Publish its determination in the California Regulatory Notice Register within 15 days of the date of issuance.
- (4) Make its determination available to the public and the courts.

(d) Any interested person may obtain judicial review of a given determination by filing a written petition requesting that the determination of the office be modified or set aside. A petition shall be filed with the court within 30 days of the date the determination is published.

(e) A determination issued by the office pursuant to this section shall not be considered by a court, or by an administrative agency in an adjudicatory proceeding if all of the following occurs:

- (1) The court or administrative agency proceeding involves the party that sought the determination from the office.
- (2) The proceeding began prior to the party's request for the office's determination.
- (3) At issue in the proceeding is the question of whether the guideline, criterion, bulletin, manual, instruction, order, standard of general application, or other rule that is the legal basis for the adjudicatory action is a regulation as defined in Section 11342.600.

(Amended by Stats. 2000, Ch. 1060, Sec. 3. Effective January 1, 2001.)

11340.6. Except where the right to petition for adoption of a regulation is restricted by statute to a designated group or where the form of procedure for such a petition is otherwise prescribed by statute, any interested person may petition a state agency requesting the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a regulation as provided in Article 5 (commencing with Section 11346). This petition shall state the following clearly and concisely:

(a) The substance or nature of the regulation, amendment, or repeal requested.

(b) The reason for the request.

(c) Reference to the authority of the state agency to take the action requested.

(Added by Stats. 1994, Ch. 1039, Sec. 5. Effective January 1, 1995.)

11340.7. (a) Upon receipt of a petition requesting the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a regulation pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 11346), a state agency shall notify the petitioner in writing of the receipt and shall within 30 days deny the petition indicating why the agency has reached its decision on the merits of the petition in writing or schedule the matter for public hearing in accordance with the notice and hearing requirements of that article.

(b) A state agency may grant or deny the petition in part, and may grant any other relief or take any other action as it may determine to be warranted by the petition and shall notify the petitioner in writing of this action.

(c) Any interested person may request a reconsideration of any part or all of a decision of any agency on any petition submitted. The request shall be submitted in accordance with Section 11340.6 and include the reason or reasons why an agency should reconsider its previous decision no later than 60 days after the date of the decision involved. The agency's reconsideration of any matter relating to a petition shall be subject to subdivision (a).

(d) Any decision of a state agency denying in whole or in part or granting in whole or in part a petition requesting the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a regulation pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 11346) shall be in writing and shall be transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for publication in the California Regulatory Notice Register at the earliest practicable date. The decision shall identify the agency, the party submitting the petition, the provisions of the California Code of Regulations requested to be affected, reference to authority to take the action requested, the reasons supporting the agency determination, an agency contact person, and the right of interested persons to obtain a copy of the petition from the agency.

(Added by Stats. 1994, Ch. 1039, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 1995.)

11340.85. (a) As used in this section, "electronic communication" includes electronic transmission of written or graphical material by electronic mail, facsimile, or other means, but does not include voice communication.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter that refers to mailing or sending, or to oral or written communication:

(1) An agency may permit and encourage use of electronic communication, but may not require use of electronic communication.

(2) An agency may publish or distribute a document required by this chapter or by a regulation implementing this chapter by means of electronic communication, but shall not make that the exclusive means by which the document is published or distributed.

(3) A notice required or authorized by this chapter or by a regulation implementing this chapter may be delivered to a person by means of electronic communication if the person has expressly indicated a willingness to receive the notice by means of electronic communication.

(4) A comment regarding a regulation may be delivered to an agency by means of electronic communication.

(5) A petition regarding a regulation may be delivered to an agency by means of electronic communication if the agency has expressly indicated a willingness to receive a petition by means of electronic communication.

(c) An agency that maintains an Internet Web site or other similar forum for the electronic publication or distribution of written material shall publish on that Web site or other forum information regarding a proposed regulation or regulatory repeal or amendment, that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(1) Any public notice required by this chapter or by a regulation implementing this chapter.

(2) The initial statement of reasons prepared pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 11346.2.

(3) The final statement of reasons prepared pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11346.9.

(4) Notice of a decision not to proceed prepared pursuant to Section 11347.

(5) The text of a proposed action or instructions on how to obtain a copy of the text.

(6) A statement of any decision made by the office regarding a proposed action.

(7) The date a rulemaking action is filed with the Secretary of State.

(8) The effective date of a rulemaking action.

(9) A statement to the effect that a business or person submitting a comment regarding a proposed action has the right to request a copy of the final statement of reasons.

(10) The text of a proposed emergency adoption, amendment, or repeal of a regulation pursuant to Section 11346.1 and the date it was submitted to the office for review and filing.

(d) A document that is required to be posted pursuant to subdivision (c) shall be posted within a reasonable time after issuance of the document, and shall remain posted until at least 15 days after (1) the rulemaking action is filed with the Secretary of State, or (2) notice of a decision not to proceed is published pursuant to Section 11347. Publication under subdivision (c) supplements any other required form of publication or distribution. Failure to comply with this section is not grounds for disapproval of a proposed regulation. Subdivision (c) does not require an agency to establish or maintain a Web site or other forum for the electronic publication or distribution of written material.

(e) Nothing in this section precludes the office from requiring that the material submitted to the office for publication in the California Code of Regulations or the California Regulatory Notice Register be submitted in electronic form.

(f) This section is intended to make the regulatory process more user-friendly and to improve communication between interested parties and the regulatory agencies.

(Amended by Stats. 2006, Ch. 713, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2007.)

11340.9. This chapter does not apply to any of the following:

(a) An agency in the judicial or legislative branch of the state government.

(b) A legal ruling of counsel issued by the Franchise Tax Board, State Board of Equalization, or the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.

(c) A form prescribed by a state agency or any instructions relating to the use of the form, but this provision is not a limitation on any requirement that a regulation be adopted pursuant to this chapter when one is needed to implement the law under which the form is issued.

(d) A regulation that relates only to the internal management of the state agency.

(e) A regulation that establishes criteria or guidelines to be used by the staff of an agency in performing an audit, investigation, examination, or inspection, settling a commercial dispute, negotiating a commercial arrangement, or in the defense, prosecution, or settlement of a case, if disclosure of the criteria or guidelines would do any of the following:

(1) Enable a law violator to avoid detection.

(2) Facilitate disregard of requirements imposed by law.

(3) Give clearly improper advantage to a person who is in an adverse position to the state.

(f) A regulation that embodies the only legally tenable interpretation of a provision of law.

(g) A regulation that establishes or fixes rates, prices, or tariffs.

(h) A regulation that relates to the use of public works, including streets and highways, when the effect of the regulation is indicated to the public by means of signs or signals or when the regulation determines uniform standards and specifications for official traffic control devices pursuant to Section 21400 of the Vehicle Code.

(i) A regulation that is directed to a specifically named person or to a group of persons and does not apply generally throughout the state.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 34, Sec. 1. (SB 167) Effective June 27, 2024.)

11341. (a) The office shall establish a system to give a unique identification number to each regulatory action.

(b) The office and the state agency taking the regulatory action shall use the identification number given by the office pursuant to subdivision (a) to refer to the regulatory action for which a notice has already been published in the California Regulatory Notice Register.

(c) The identification number shall be sufficient information for a member of the public to identify and track a regulatory action both with the office and the state agency taking the regulatory action. No other information pertaining to the regulatory action shall be required of a member of the public if the identification number of the regulatory action has been provided.

(Added by Stats. 2000, Ch. 1059, Sec. 5. Effective January 1, 2001.)

11342.1. Except as provided in Section 11342.4, nothing in this chapter confers authority upon or augments the authority of any state agency to adopt, administer, or enforce any regulation. Each regulation adopted, to be effective, shall be within the scope of authority conferred and in accordance with standards prescribed by other provisions of law.

(Amended by Stats. 1987, Ch. 1375, Sec. 2.)

11342.2. Whenever by the express or implied terms of any statute a state agency has authority to adopt regulations to implement, interpret, make specific or otherwise carry out the provisions of the statute, no regulation adopted is valid or effective unless consistent and not in conflict with the statute and reasonably necessary to effectuate the purpose of the statute.

(Added by Stats. 1979, Ch. 567.)

11342.4. The office shall adopt, amend, or repeal regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

(Added by renumbering Section 11344.6 by Stats. 1983, Ch. 797, Sec. 12.)