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A BILL
25-769

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



To amend, on an temporary basis, the Small and Certified Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Act of 2005 to establish uniform hearing procedures for enforcement actions.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Certified Business Enterprise Program Compliance and Enforcement Support Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”.

Sec. 2. The Small and Certified Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Act of 2005, effective October 20, 2005 (D.C. Law 16-33; D.C. Official Code § 2-218.01 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

(a) Section 2302 (D.C. Official Code § 2-218.02) is amended as follows:

(1) Paragraph (9A) is redesignated paragraph (9B).

(2) A new paragraph (9A) is added to read as follows:

“(9A) “Formal complaint” means a complaint that is submitted to the Department in writing, sworn to by the complainant, and notarized.”.

(3) A new paragraph (10A) is added to read as follows:

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22 “(10A) “Informal complaint” means a complaint other than a formal complaint
23 and includes complaints submitted in person, by email, by telephone, or through the
24 Department’s complaint hotline.”

25 (4) Paragraph (13B) is redesignated as paragraph (13C).

26 (5) New paragraph (13B) is added to read as follows:

27 “(13B) “Person” means any individual, firm, partnership, joint venture, general
28 partner of a partnership, limited liability company, registered limited liability partnership, foreign
29 limited liability partnership, association, corporation, unincorporated business, company,
30 syndicate, estate, trust, business trust, trustee, trustee in bankruptcy, receiver, executor,
31 administrator, assignee, fiduciary, or entity of any kind.”

32 (b) Section 2363 (D.C. Official Code § 2-218.63) is amended as follows:

33 (1) Subsection (c) is amended by striking the phrase “, in accordance with
34 procedures set forth in subsection (e) of this section,”.

35 (2) Subsection (e) is amended as follows:

36 (A) Paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) are amended to read as follows:

37 “(e)(1)(A) Any person may file with the Department a formal or informal
38 complaint alleging a violation of this act.

39 “(B) The Department shall maintain a hotline for the filing of informal
40 complaints.

41 “(2) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, the Department shall
42 investigate each formal or informal complaint filed with it.

43 “(3) The Department may dismiss a complaint without conducting an
44 investigation if the Department determines the complaint is frivolous or otherwise without merit.
45 If the Department dismisses a formal complaint as frivolous or otherwise without merit, the
46 Department shall prepare a report that includes:

47 “(A) A statement detailing the formal complaint, including the name,
48 address, and telephone number of the person filing the complaint;

49 “(B) The name of the person or certified joint venture alleged to be in
50 violation of this act;

51 “(C) The facts and law considered in rendering the determination; and

52 “(D) Any other information considered in rendering the determination.”.

53 (B) Paragraph (4) is repealed.

54 (C) New paragraphs (5) and (6) are added to read as follows:

55 “(5) After the completion of an investigation conducted pursuant to this
56 subsection, the Department shall take such enforcement action, if any, it deems appropriate.

57 “(6) The Department shall maintain a record listing all formal complaints, which
58 shall contain:

59 “(A) The name of the person alleged to be in violation of this act;

60 “(B) The date the formal complaint was made to the Department; and

61 “(C) A description of the formal complaint.”.

62 (3) Subsection (g) is amended to read as follows:

63 “(g)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (8) of this subsection, before issuing a civil
64 penalty to, or denying, suspending, changing, or revoking a certification, a person or a certified
65 joint venture, the Department shall issue a notice of determination to the person or certified joint
66 venture. The notice of determination shall describe the:

67 “(A) Basis for the Department’s determination;

68 “(B) Proposed penalty, if any; and

69 “(C) Process and timeline by which the person or certified joint venture
70 may request a hearing.

71 “(2) Pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection, a person or designated
72 representative on behalf of a certified joint venture may request a hearing before the Office of
73 Administrative Hearings within 10 days after receiving the notice. If the person or certified joint
74 venture does not request a hearing within that time, the civil penalty, denial, suspension, change,
75 or revocation shall become final, and the person or certified joint venture shall be deemed to
76 have waived the opportunity for judicial review.

77 “(3) If a hearing is requested, the Office of Administrative Hearings shall consider
78 the matter pursuant to section 19 of the Office of Administrative Hearings Establishment Act of
79 2001, effective March 6, 2002 (D.C. Law 14-76; D.C. Official Code § 2-1831.16), and the rules

80 issued pursuant to it. The Department shall bear the burden of establishing the violation by a
81 preponderance of the evidence.

82 “(4) The decision of the Office of Administrative Hearings shall be the final
83 administrative decision for the purpose of judicial review.

84 “(5) Notice of a final suspension or revocation of a certification shall be published
85 on the Department’s website.

86 “(6) A business enterprise or joint venture whose certification has been revoked
87 shall not be eligible to apply for a new certification from the Department until 36 months after
88 the date that the revocation became final.

89 “(7)(A) The Department may at any time, upon motion by a business enterprise or
90 joint venture whose certification has been suspended or revoked, remove the suspension or
91 reissue a certification, if the Department determines that it is in the District government’s interest
92 to remove the suspension or reissue the certification before the end of the 36-month period and
93 the removal or reissuance will not endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the general public.

94 “(B) In determining whether to remove a suspension or reissuance a certification,
95 the Department shall consider whether the business enterprise or joint venture submitted
96 satisfactory proof that conditions within, or actions by, the business enterprise or joint venture
97 that led to the suspension or revocation have been corrected.

98 “(C) A business enterprise or joint venture whose certification is reissued shall
99 cease to be subject to the 36-month waiting period established in paragraph (6) of this
100 subsection.

101 “(8)(A) If, after an investigation, the Department determines that a business
102 enterprise or joint venture certified under this act has violated any provision of this act in such a
103 manner as to present an imminent danger to the health, safety, or welfare of any person or the
104 general public, the Department may summarily suspend the certification of the business
105 enterprise or joint venture upon issuing the notice of determination described in paragraph (1) of
106 this subsection.

107 “(B)(i) The notice of determination shall inform the business enterprise or
108 joint venture of the reason for the summary suspension and the right to request a hearing before
109 the Office of Administrative Hearings pursuant to this subsection.

110 “(ii) If a business enterprise or joint venture timely requests
111 a hearing on a summary suspension, the Office of Administrative Hearings shall conduct the
112 hearing within 14 days after receiving the request, unless a longer period of time is agreed to by
113 the business enterprise or joint venture, and shall issue a decision within 14 days after the record
114 of the hearing closes.”.

115 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

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116 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement of the Budget Director as the fiscal impact
117 statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
118 October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

119 Sec. 4. Effective date.

120 (a) This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
121 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 60-day period of congressional review as
122 provided in section 602(c)(2) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24,
123 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(2)).

124 (b) This act shall expire after 225 days of its having taken effect.