



Bill Analysis

Author: Lowenthal

Sponsor:

Bill Number: AB 1135

Related Bills: See Legislative
History

Introduced: February 15, 2023

SUBJECT

State Toll-free Telephone Lease Lines

SUMMARY

This bill would, under the Government Code (GOV), require state agencies to change all telephone numbers it operates from toll-free telephone numbers to non-toll-free telephone numbers. In addition, it would repeal the provision which allows state agencies, to install and operate toll-free lease lines.

RECOMMENDATION

No position.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS

Not applicable.

REASON FOR THE BILL

The reason for this bill is to change all state agency operated toll-free numbers to non-toll-free numbers.

ANALYSIS

This bill would, under the GOV, repeal the provision that allows state agencies, including the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), to install and operate toll-free lease lines, and have them accessible to both tone dial and rotary dial telephones.

By January 1 of an unspecified year, each state agency would be required to change all their toll-free numbers to non-toll-free numbers. The new non-toll-free number or numbers would be required to be posted on the state agencies' internet website and all publications updated with the new numbers within one year of the change to non-toll-free numbers.

Introduced February 15, 2023

A state agency may maintain a toll-free number if they deem it necessary, but the primary telephone number or numbers offered to the public that the agency operates from, must be non-toll-free numbers.

Effective/Operative Date

This bill would be effective and operative January 1, 2024.

Federal/State Law

Federal Law

No comparable provision in federal law.

State Law

Current state law provides that a state agency may install and operate toll-free telephone lease lines with the approval of the Department of General Services (DGS). The purpose of the toll-free lines is to provide access to the public and local government agencies. DGS has guidelines to promote efficient use of a toll-free lease lines by state agencies. All toll-free telephone numbers are required to be published at least once, in the California Regulatory Notice Register. In addition, information available on toll-free lease lines must be accessible by both dial and rotary dial telephones.

Implementation Considerations

The department has identified the following implementation considerations and is available to work with the author's office to resolve these and other considerations that may be identified.

This bill does not provide a specific date by which state agencies must change to non-toll-free telephone numbers. This bill would require major changes to the department's operations, including tax forms, outreach material, internet website, and the existing methods that taxpayers use to contact FTB. Depending on when this requirement would need to be met, the FTB may not have adequate time to implement all necessary changes without significant impacts and risks to systems and core processes, such as return and payment processing.

Technical Considerations

None noted.

Introduced February 15, 2023

Policy Considerations

This bill would require the FTB to change all toll-free numbers currently used to non-toll-free numbers. Due to the high volume of calls the FTB receives, callers at times must call multiple times or can experience long wait times. Although many callers may have unlimited phone plans, others, such as those in underrepresented areas may not, making this bill a burden to some.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

No legislation similar to this bill has been identified.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The FTB uses numerous toll-free numbers to allow taxpayers to communicate easily with the FTB. Toll-free numbers are shared in numerous places including the following:

- Approximately 125 current year tax forms.
- Over 2700 forms and publications.
- Approximately 250 static web pages.

FISCAL IMPACT

The department's costs to implement this bill have yet to be determined. As the bill moves through the legislative process, costs will be determined.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Revenue Estimate

This bill as introduced on February 15, 2023, would not impact state income or franchise tax revenue.

LEGAL IMPACT

None noted.

APPOINTMENTS

None noted.

SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

To be determined.

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Introduced February 15, 2023

ARGUMENTS

To be determined.

LEGISLATIVE CONTACT

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