



Advocacy: the voice of small business in government

March 31, 2008

Representative Frank Attkisson
Chair, Government Efficiency & Accountability Council
303 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Chairman Attkisson:

I am writing in support of proposed council bill GEAC 08-22, the Small Business Regulatory Relief bill, which strengthens Florida's current regulatory flexibility law. This bill would strengthen the current system by creating both a Small Business Regulatory Advisory Council and the position of Small Business Advocate to oversee the rulemaking process. In addition, the bill adds periodic review requirements, reporting requirements, and makes an agency's economic impact statement mandatory. These changes will help to foster a friendlier regulatory environment, which is critical to the survival and success of Florida's small business community.

In 2002, I was appointed to head the Office of Advocacy at the U.S. Small Business Administration. My office was created in 1976 to independently represent the views of small business before Congress, the White House, and other governmental entities.

My office has funded research that documents how small entities expend 45 percent more than their larger counterparts to comply with federal regulations. However, any small business owner on Main Street will tell you that regulatory burdens do not just come from Washington. Regulatory burdens at the state level are weighing down the small business sector that is most likely to produce jobs, lead the state in innovation, and contribute most to communities.

It is essential to take the interests of small businesses into account in the rulemaking process because they are the backbone of the economy in Florida, and throughout the country. According to the federal definition of small business (500 or fewer), 99 percent of Florida's employers are considered small. A friendly regulatory environment is critical to small business survival and growth and this bill will help to foster a competitive environment to support these goals.

Florida has already taken steps forward to support the small business community by enacting legislation that requires a regulatory flexibility analysis. I applaud your actions and encourage you to do even more to level the playing field for small business. This bill can help to achieve this goal by going further to ensure agency compliance with the rulemaking requirements.

The intent of regulatory flexibility for small business is to promote a climate for job growth and entrepreneurial success. With your continued leadership, excessive regulation and the costs of compliance can be reduced and the economy improved, without sacrificing important regulatory goals. With the support of the legislature, the Small Business Regulatory Relief bill will further ensure that small businesses are treated fairly in the Florida regulatory process.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Sullivan
Chief Counsel for Advocacy

cc: Vice Chair Michael J. Grant
Democratic Ranking Member Matthew J. Meadows