

01.07.13 Regulatory Reform Announcement

AS DELIVERED:

Governor Deval L. Patrick
Regulatory Reform Announcement
Room 360, State House
Monday, January 7, 2013

Good afternoon and thank you for coming.

Last March, we launched a review of all of the regulations promulgated over the years by state government. The objective was to get rid of those that no longer serve a purpose and update those that had gone stale. Not only is this review unprecedented in Massachusetts, but it was at the outset unique across the country. Other states are now following suit.

In less than a year, we have reviewed 446 sets of regulations in more than 60 state agencies. As of today, we have identified 286 regulations to be eliminated or amended – that's more than half of those we've reviewed and about 14% of our state's total regulations. This work of modernizing our rules will remove unnecessary barriers to starting a small business, make state government more efficient, and better align our practices with widely accepted national models.

As important as modernizing the rules, is modernizing the culture of state government. Over the past year, we have worked across agencies to improve the way we do business, to break down silos and open the lines of communication to enable smarter decision-making. For example, agencies are now evaluating the impacts of new regulation as part of their decisions, which provides a more balanced approach to regulating. This is a culture shift, and it is a work in progress, but we have seen that it works and we are going to stick with it.

There are a few examples that stand out from this year:

We will have standardized permitting and police escort fees for oversized loads on the MassPike, a move that allows for freer transit of trucks while still maintaining public safety parameters.

We are making it easier to approve requests for access to MassDOT property, including curb cuts and other construction access permits, eliminating regulatory hurdles that were slowing down construction.

We are streamlining the tax return extension process to make applications easier for small business. This reform alone helps over 71,000 businesses.

Our review has also identified areas for improvement at the Division of Professional Licensure, an agency that regulates 31 boards of registration and 365,000 different kinds of licensees.

Today I am filing legislation that makes a series of common-sense changes to the Division's operations. These include merging the barber and electrology boards into a new Cosmetology and Barbering Board, eliminating the Board of Registration of Radio and Television Technicians, and removing other statutory language in an effort to streamline and improve state services. The legislation also eliminates re-entry fees for professionals who leave and later return to their field.

These common-sense changes in the Division of Professional Licensure are small, but significant steps forward for thousands of businesses. This is another way we are making Massachusetts an even better place to do business.

I'd like to thank Secretary Greg Bialecki and Assistant Secretary April Anderson for their leadership on our regulatory reform efforts. We would be happy to take any questions you have.