

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 745
By: Duncan
State Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law requires a state employee to certify travel expenses for which the employee seeks reimbursement by approving a completed travel voucher. The voucher contains coding elements used for accounting that are not relevant to the employee's declaration of expenses incurred and trip purpose. If a travel voucher's coding elements need correction, the employee must reapprove the corrected voucher even if there is no change to the employee's travel details, which causes travel vouchers to be sent back and forth between accounting staff and traveling employees. This process delays travel voucher processing, creates barriers for electronic travel vouchers, and requires an employee to certify elements, such as USAS coding elements, that are generally unknown to the employee.

S.B. 745 revises procedures and requirements relating to advance written approval, and completion and submission of vouchers, for state employee travel.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 745 amends the Government Code to authorize a state agency's chief administrator to electronically communicate the required advance written approval for any travel related to official state business for which a reimbursement for travel expenses is claimed or for which an advance for travel expenses to be incurred is sought. The bill removes provisions that required a copy of the written approval to be submitted with a travel voucher to the comptroller of public accounts.

S.B. 745 requires a travel voucher to be supported by a description of the official state business performed and the information and documentation that the comptroller considers necessary to determine compliance with state law on travel expenses, the travel provisions of the General Appropriations Act, and the rules adopted by the comptroller relating to travel expenses. The bill clarifies that the comptroller is authorized to require a state agency to provide that description, information, and documentation either on a form adopted by the comptroller, by electronic means, by submitting receipts or other documents, or by any combination of those.

S.B. 745 specifies that a voucher submitted by a state agency to the comptroller that requests the payment or reimbursement of a travel expense is valid only if, among other requirements, the state employee who incurred the travel expense or another individual acceptable to the comptroller approves the description, information, and documentation, with the qualification that the employee's approval is not required if another person is required by law to provide the approval. S.B. 745 authorizes the comptroller to require or authorize the description, information, and documentation relating to a travel expense payment or reimbursement to be maintained in paper form or electronically. S.B. 745 makes conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.