

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

LFB 1/30/2008

LRB Number	07-3470/3	Introduction Number	AB-0739	Estimate Type	Original
Description Relating to: preparation and legislative consideration of a biennial budget bill.					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This estimate is limited to an estimate of the fiscal effect of this bill on the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Under the bill, the Fiscal Bureau would be required to prepare an "earmark transparency report" on each biennial budget bill and on each amendment to a biennial budget. The report would contain all of the following: (a) a list of all earmarks and nonfiscal policy items; (b) the cost of each earmark and nonfiscal policy item; and (c) the beneficiary of each earmark and nonfiscal policy item. The bill specifies that if the beneficiary of an earmark is: (a) an individual, the report must identify the Assembly and Senate district in which the beneficiary resides; or (b) an entity, the report must identify the Assembly and Senate district in which the beneficiary is located, incorporated, or organized. If an identity cannot be determined, the report must note that fact. If an amendment to the biennial budget bill is included in the report, the name of the Representative or Senator who proposed the earmark or nonfiscal policy item must be included.

The bill defines an "earmark" as a provision in a bill or amendment that authorizes or requires the payment of state moneys to a specific beneficiary or beneficiaries in a manner not determined by laws of general applicability for the selection of the beneficiary or beneficiaries. "Nonfiscal policy item" is defined as a provision in a bill or amendment that does not appropriate money, provide for revenue, or relate to taxation.

Under the bill, the Joint Committee on Finance could not vote to recommend passage of the biennial budget bill, as amended, until the Fiscal Bureau has distributed a copy of the "earmark transparency report" to each member of the Legislature and at least 48 hours has passed from the time when the report was distributed. Similarly, the bill specifies that neither house of the Legislature may pass a biennial budget bill until a copy of an "earmark transparency report" on the biennial budget bill, as amended, has been prepared, distributed to each member of the Legislature, and at least 48 hours have passed from the time when the report was distributed.

Currently, the Fiscal Bureau prepares summary documents associated with the biennial budget subsequent to submission of agency budget requests to the Governor, introduction of the budget by the Governor, and action by the Joint Committee on Finance, each house of the Legislature, any Committee of Conference, and signing of the bill by the Governor. The preparation of "earmark transparency reports" could be accomplished in conjunction with these activities utilizing existing staff and resources.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications