



NEWS RELEASE

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Small business advocate on board at Commerce

(Anchorage, March 21, 2006) Alaska small businesses now have an advocate in the state to watch for regulation changes that affect them. Jennifer Abbott, former director of the Small Business Administration's Alaska Women's Business Center has been hired to take a critical look at the economic impact of proposed regulations on small businesses.

The position was added last legislative session by House Bill 33 which was sponsored by Anchorage Representative Kevin Meyer and signed by Governor Frank H. Murkowski in 2005.

The new law, which took effect in January of this year, gives Alaska's small businesses, and the government agencies that regulate them, a liaison in the State of Alaska Department of Commerce.

Abbott's review will be of proposed regulation changes within the Departments of Commerce, Health and Social Services, Labor and Workforce Development, and to some of the regulations of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Abbott will work with regulators within the defined state agencies to analyze the economic impact of proposed regulations on small businesses and ensure there are not redundancies in regulations. Small businesses are defined as businesses with 100 or fewer employees.

Abbott, a 16-year entrepreneurship trainer and former business owner is no stranger to government regulations and their effects on small businesses. She has taught regulatory compliance for small businesses and has heard often about the compliance challenges caused by government regulations.

“Small businesses often have limited resources,” said Abbott. “We want to help ensure Alaska’s small businesses are able to build their assets and provide jobs and economic stability for the state.”

The trend to consider financial and regulatory flexibility for small businesses began 26 years ago with the passage of the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 that required federal agencies to do financial impact statements and regulatory flexibility analyses prior to adopting federal regulations that disproportionately affected small businesses. In 1996 the Small Business Administration’s Office of Advocacy was assigned the task of advocating for similar legislation at the state level. Currently there are 37 states that have enacted these laws.

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