

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 659

Approved by the Governor June 3, 1997

Introduced by Withem, 14; Robak, 22

AN ACT relating to economic development; to amend section 81-1201.14, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to create the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance; to create the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance Board; to provide powers and duties; to provide a limitation on liability; and to repeal the original section.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 81-1201.14, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-1201.14. The primary responsibility of the Existing Business Assistance Division shall be to provide assistance to in-state businesses. Such assistance shall encourage the startup of new businesses and the retention and expansion of existing businesses. Emphasis shall be placed upon meeting the unique needs of small businesses in the state. Activities of the division shall include, but not be limited to, financial packaging, technical assistance, contacts with existing businesses regarding needs, workforce development, job training assistance, export technical assistance, and assistance to businesses in accessing new markets and new technologies.

The division shall avoid duplication with existing programs already in place which assist small businesses and entrepreneurs, and the department and the division shall deliver their programs through, to the extent possible, the Nebraska Small Business Development Centers Center, the Nebraska Technical Assistance Center, the Nebraska Food Processing Center Nebraska FoodStrategy, the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, the Small Business Administration of the federal government, the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance, and other related organizations.

The Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance is hereby created within the department. The alliance shall be a cooperative partnership of individuals and organizations from business, labor, education, and government which assists Nebraska manufacturers to be more competitive in the world market. The alliance shall be governed by a board appointed by the Governor upon recommendation from the department. The Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance Board shall consist of twenty-two to twenty-eight members of which the majority shall be individuals from the private sector and at least one-half of whom shall represent small and medium-sized manufacturers. Not more than eight members of the board shall be from state or local government. The board shall establish and approve bylaws to govern its operations and will have the following powers and duties:

(1) To advise the Governor and state agencies on policies and activities that will advance the competitiveness of Nebraska's manufacturing sector;

(2) To provide programmatic policy, guidance, and oversight to the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Service manufacturing extension program and the School-to-Work Program and provide oversight to the Science and Technology Program and any other programs as assigned by the Governor or by the department;

(3) To establish a fee for selected services; and

(4) To receive and approve the expenditure of funds appropriated by the Legislature or received through federal program grants, gifts, bequests, fees, commissions, and other contributions from private sources.

Members of the Nebraska Industrial Competitiveness Alliance Board shall not be liable to the state, to the alliance, or to any other person as a result of their activities, whether ministerial or discretionary, except for dishonesty, negligence, or intentional violation of the law.

Sec. 2. Original section 81-1204.14, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is repealed.