

CHAPTER 2012-31

House Bill No. 7029

An act relating to the repeal of administrative rules; amending s. 120.536, F.S.; providing for repeal of administrative rules upon the repeal of the law implemented; creating s. 120.555, F.S.; providing a process for summary repeal of administrative rules that are no longer in effect; nullifying specific administrative rules adopted by the Northwest Florida Water Management District, Suwannee River Water Management District, St. Johns River Water Management District, Southwest Florida Water Management District, South Florida Water Management District, the former Department of Commerce, the former Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Health Program Office, the former Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, or the former Department of Labor and Employment Security; directing the Department of Health and the Department of Education to initiate necessary rulemaking before the effective date of specified rule nullifications; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Present subsections (2) and (3) of section 120.536, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (3) and (4), respectively, and a new subsection (2) is added to that section to read:

120.536 Rulemaking authority; repeal; challenge.—

(2) Unless otherwise expressly provided by law:

(a) The repeal of one or more provisions of law implemented by a rule that on its face implements only the provision or provisions repealed and no other provision of law nullifies the rule. Whenever notice of the nullification of a rule under this subsection is received from the committee or otherwise, the Department of State shall remove the rule from the Florida Administrative Code as of the effective date of the law effecting the nullification and update the historical notes for the code to show the rule repealed by operation of law.

(b) The repeal of one or more provisions of law implemented by a rule that on its face implements the provision or provisions repealed and one or more other provisions of law nullifies the rule or applicable portion of the rule to the extent that it implements the repealed law. The agency having authority to repeal or amend the rule shall, within 180 days after the effective date of the repealing law, publish a notice of rule development identifying all portions of rules affected by the repealing law and if no notice is timely

published the operation of each rule implementing a repealed provision of law shall be suspended until such notice is published.

(c) The repeal of one or more provisions of law that, other than as provided in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b), causes a rule or portion of a rule to be of uncertain enforceability requires the Department of State to treat the rule as provided by s. 120.555. A rule shall be considered to be of uncertain enforceability under this paragraph if the division notifies the Department of State that a rule or a portion of the rule has been invalidated in a division proceeding based upon a repeal of law, or the committee gives written notification to the Department of State and the agency having power to amend or repeal the rule that a law has been repealed creating doubt about whether the rule is still in full force and effect.

Section 2. Section 120.555, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

120.555.—Summary removal of published rules no longer in force and effect.—When, as part of the continuous revision system authorized in s. 120.55(1)(a)1. or as otherwise provided by law, the Department of State is in doubt whether a rule published in the official version of the Florida Administrative Code is still in full force and effect, the procedure in this section shall be employed.

(1) The Department of State shall submit to the head of the agency with authority to repeal or amend the rule, if any, or if no such agency can be identified, to the Governor, a written request for a statement as to whether the rule is still in full force and effect. A copy of the request shall be promptly delivered to the committee and to the Attorney General. The Department of State shall publish a notice of the request together with a copy of the request in the Florida Administrative Weekly next available after delivery of the request to the head of the agency or the Governor.

(2) No later than 90 days after the date the notice required in subsection (1) is published, the agency or the Governor, notified pursuant to subsection (1), shall file a written response with the Department of State stating whether the rule is in full force and effect and under the jurisdiction of an agency with full authority to amend or repeal the rule. Failure to respond timely under this subsection constitutes an acknowledgement by the agency or the Governor that the rule is no longer in effect and is subject to summary repeal under this section.

(3) The Department of State shall publish a notice of the agency's or Governor's timely response or the acknowledgement determined under subsection (2) in the Florida Administrative Weekly next available after receipt of the response or the expiration of the response period, whichever occurs first.

(4) If the response states that the rule is no longer in effect, or if no response is filed timely with the Department of State, the notice required in subsection (3) shall also give notice of the following:

(a) Based on the agency's or Governor's written response or the acknowledgement determined under subsection (2), the rule will be repealed summarily pursuant to this section and removed from the Florida Administrative Code.

(b) Any objection to the summary repeal under this section must be filed as a petition challenging a proposed rule under s. 120.56 and must be filed no later than 21 days after the date the notice is published in the Florida Administrative Weekly.

(c) For purposes only of challenging a summary repeal under this section, the agency with current authority to repeal the rule under s. 120.54 shall be named as the respondent in the petition and shall be the proper party in interest. In such circumstances, the Department of State shall not be named as a party in a petition filed under paragraph (b) and this paragraph.

(d) If no agency currently has authority to repeal the rule under s. 120.54, the Department of State shall be named as the respondent in a petition filed under paragraph (b) and this paragraph. The Attorney General shall represent the Department of State in all proceedings under this paragraph.

(5) Upon the expiration of the 21-day period to file an objection to a notice of summary repeal published pursuant to subsection (4), if no timely objection is filed, or, if a timely objection is filed, on the date a decision finding the rule is no longer in effect becomes final, the Department of State shall update the Florida Administrative Code to remove the rule and shall provide historical notes identifying the manner in which the rule ceased to have effect, including the summary repeal pursuant to this section.