

Section 120.573

CHAPTER 96-159

Section 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to consider the impact of any agency rulemaking required by proposed legislation and to determine whether the proposed legislation provides adequate and appropriate standards and guidelines to direct the agency's implementation of the proposed legislation.

Section 20. Section 120.573, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

120.573 Mediation of disputes

Each announcement of an agency action that affects substantial interests shall advise whether mediation of the administrative dispute for the type of agency action announced is available and that choosing mediation does not affect the right to an administrative hearing. If the agency and all parties to the administrative action agree to mediation, in writing, within the time period stated in the announcement for election of an administrative remedy under ss. 120.569 and 120.57, the time limitations imposed by ss. 120.569 and 120.57 shall be tolled to allow the agency and parties to mediate the administrative dispute. The mediation shall be concluded within 60 days of such agreement unless otherwise agreed by the parties. The mediation agreement shall include provisions for mediator selection, the allocation of costs and fees associated with mediation, and the mediating parties' understanding regarding the confidentiality of discussions and documents introduced during mediation. If mediation results in settlement of the administrative dispute, the agency shall enter a final order incorporating the agreement of the parties. If mediation terminates without settlement of the dispute, the agency shall notify the parties in writing that the administrative hearing processes under ss. 120.569 and 120.57 remain available for disposition of the dispute and the notice shall state with particularity the deadlines for challenging the agency action and electing remedies under ss. 120.569 and 120.57.

CHAPTER 97-176

Section 9. Section 120.573, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, is amended to read:

120.573 Mediation of disputes.—Each announcement of an agency action that affects substantial interests shall advise whether mediation of the administrative dispute for the type of agency action announced is available and that choosing mediation does not affect the right to an administrative hearing. If the agency and all parties to the administrative action agree to mediation, in writing, within 10 days after the time period stated in the announcement for election of an administrative remedy under ss. 120.569 and 120.57, the time limitations imposed by ss. 120.569 and 120.57 shall be tolled to allow the agency

and parties to mediate the administrative dispute. The mediation shall be concluded within 60 days of such agreement unless otherwise agreed by the parties. The mediation agreement shall include provisions for mediator selection, the allocation of costs and fees associated with mediation, and the mediating parties' understanding regarding the confidentiality of discussions and documents introduced during mediation. If mediation results in settlement of the administrative dispute, the agency shall enter a final order incorporating the agreement of the parties. If mediation terminates without settlement of the dispute, the agency shall notify the parties in writing that the administrative hearing processes under ss. 120.569 and 120.57 are resumed ~~remain available for disposition of the dispute and the notice shall state with particularity the deadlines for challenging the agency action and electing remedies under ss. 120.569 and 120.57.~~