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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Taylor, J.P.                      DATE TYPED: 02/27/03    HB 675a/HGUAC

SHORT TITLE: Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons    SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST: Weber

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
			(485.7)	Recurring	General Fund
			485.7	Recurring	OSF

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From  
 Department of Finance and Administration  
 Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

No Response Received From  
 General Services Department

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Amendment

On page 10, line 3 after “ACT” insert “and for carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the commission”. This provides that funds can be used for administrative expenses.

#### Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 675 transfers the duties and powers of the Telecommunication Access Act from the General Services Department to the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons. The duties and responsibilities were previously shared by the two agencies.

#### Significant Issues

The General Services Department (GSD) has administered the Telecommunications Access Act in conjunction with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Commission). The cur-

rent statute requires GSD, in consultation with the Commission, to establish and administer a telecommunications relay system that enables impaired individuals to communicate with unimpaired individuals. The State Budget Division of the Department of Finance of Administration may approve an expenditure of not more than 10% of the amount deposited in the Telecommunications Access Fund during any fiscal year for administrative expenses.

HB 675 moves the Telecommunications Access Act responsibilities and the associated fund to the Commission. The Commission reports that over the past 10 years it has increasingly performed most of the duties of the Telecommunications Act. The Commission has 5.5 FTE administering and performing service functions in conjunction with a contractor with over 100 employees plus a state-wide equipment distribution program. The Commission has been providing most of the service with the exception of the following: issuing one warrant to pay one contractor, once a month; issuing warrants for equipment purchases during an order period which may be once every other year; and; recording deposits to the fund. These tasks would be simple to assume.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

House Bill 675 would consolidate the allowed administrative fee in the Commission rather than splitting it with GSD. This would reduce the Commission's General Fund need by \$485,700 that would be drawn from the Telecommunications Access Fund.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

The amended language in Section 7 reads.

The Commission may request the state budget division of the department of finance an administration to approve the expenditure of funds deposited in the telecommunications access fund for the purpose of defraying salary and other necessary expenses incurred by the commission in the Telecommunications Access Act.

Consideration should be given to a language change making the Legislature responsible for the appropriation of administrative expenses rather than the Department of Administration.

MW/njw:sb