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1ST SESSION

H. R. 2831

To establish the Office of Economic Conversion Information within the
Department of Commerce, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 2, 1993

Ms. SCHENK introduced the following bill; which was referred jointly to the
Committees on Energy and Commerce and Armed Services

A BILL

To establish the Office of Economic Conversion Information
within the Department of Commerce, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Economic Conversion
5 Clearinghouse Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. OFFICE.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established, within
8 the Department of Commerce, the Office of Economic
9 Conversion Information (in this Act referred to as the
10 “Office”).

1 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of the Office—

2 (1) to serve as a central information clearing-
3 house on matters relating to economic adjustment
4 and defense conversion programs and activities of
5 the Federal and State governments, including politi-
6 cal subdivisions of the States; and

7 (2) to help potential and actual applicants for
8 economic adjustment and defense conversion assist-
9 ance under Federal, State and local laws in locating
10 and applying for such assistance, including financial
11 and technical assistance.

12 (c) DIRECTOR.—The Office shall be headed by a Di-
13 rector. The Secretary of Commerce shall appoint and fix
14 the compensation of the Director.

15 (d) STAFF.—The Director may appoint such person-
16 nel as may be necessary to enable the Office to perform
17 its duties.

18 **SEC. 3. FUNCTIONS.**

19 (a) INFORMATION DATABASES.—

20 (1) USES.—The Office shall develop informa-
21 tion databases for use by Federal departments and
22 agencies, State and local governmental agencies,
23 public and private entities, and individuals to assist
24 such agencies, entities, and individuals in the proc-
25 ess of identifying and applying for assistance and re-

1 sources under economic adjustment and defense con-
2 version programs and activities of the Federal,
3 State, and local governments.

4 (2) FEDERAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS.—The
5 databases established pursuant to paragraph (1)
6 shall include a comprehensive compilation of all rel-
7 evant information concerning available economic ad-
8 justment and defense conversion-related programs of
9 the Federal Government. The compilation shall iden-
10 tify the administering department, office, or agency,
11 which administers such programs, and key contact
12 people; and descriptions of the application process,
13 eligibility requirements and criteria, selection, and
14 follow up procedures. Such compilation shall also in-
15 clude data as to the expenditure of funds under such
16 programs, projects supported by such programs, and
17 the types and amounts of funding available for as-
18 sistance under such programs.

19 (3) RANGE OF PROGRAMS.—The range of pro-
20 grams covered by the database shall include: worker
21 adjustment assistance for private sector employees
22 and Federal civilian and military personnel; commu-
23 nity adjustment assistance (planning and implemen-
24 tation), including the so-called “bricks and mortar”
25 programs, such as infrastructure rebuilding, and air-

1 port improvement; technology development and de-
2 ployment programs administered through the Ad-
3 vanced Research Projects Agency, Department of
4 Defense, coordinated Technology Reinvestment
5 Project; other relevant technology research and de-
6 velopment programs administered by the Depart-
7 ment of Commerce, National Aeronautics and Space
8 Administration, Department of Energy, the Environ-
9 mental Protection Agency, Department of Transpor-
10 tation, and the National Institutes of Health and
11 other technology agencies; small business assistance
12 (financial, technical, marketing); defense facility en-
13 vironmental restoration; available tax credits and in-
14 centives, relevant regulatory information (environ-
15 mental, occupational health and safety, and intellec-
16 tual property rights) affecting application procedures
17 and the implementation of federally supported
18 projects involving economic adjustment and defense
19 conversion.

20 (4) AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE.—In developing
21 such database, the Office shall survey all Federal de-
22 partments and agencies in order to identify all rel-
23 evant assistance and resources that may be available
24 to assist defense-dependent communities, businesses,
25 and workers in their adjustment and conversion ef-

1 forts, especially the Department of Defense, the De-
2 partment of Commerce, the Department of Labor,
3 the Small Business Administration, the Department
4 of Housing and Urban Development, the Depart-
5 ment of Health and Human Services, the Depart-
6 ment of Education, the Department of Transpor-
7 tation, the National Science Foundation, the Na-
8 tional Aeronautics and Space Administration, and
9 the Environmental Protection Agency.

10 (5) DATABASE OF MAJOR STATE AND LOCAL
11 PROGRAMS.—The Office shall establish a database
12 containing State and local governmental economic
13 adjustment and defense conversion assistance pro-
14 grams. Such database shall include a current listing
15 of appropriate offices, officers, and contact personnel
16 connected with, or involved in, such programs.

17 (6) DEFENSE CUTBACK EARLY WARNING
18 DATABASE.—The Office, working with the Secretary
19 of Defense, shall establish and keep current a
20 database containing a listing of available defense
21 contracts, and information listing military bases and
22 installations expected to be closed, cut back, or re-
23 aligned, or which are in the process of being closed,
24 cut back, or realigned, including a current listing of
25 States, communities, industries, firms, and employ-

1 ment likely to be most adversely affected as a result
2 thereof.

3 (7) DATABASE OF CONVERSION EFFORTS AND
4 SUCSESSES.—The Office shall establish a database
5 of listings and descriptions of defense conversion ef-
6 forts, their successes and failures, as well as a cur-
7 rent listing of ongoing conversion and assistance ef-
8 forts by communities, contractors, and small- and
9 mid-sized businesses, and labor organizations.

10 (8) REFERENCE LISTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES.—
11 The Office shall establish a database which shall in-
12 clude a listing of published works (books, reports,
13 articles, videos, and tapes) related to all facets of de-
14 fense economic adjustment and defense conversion.
15 Such listing shall further include manuals relating to
16 economic adjustment and defense conversion devel-
17 oped by the National Governors Association, the Na-
18 tional League of Cities, public interest groups, labor
19 unions, business associations, and similar organiza-
20 tions, and a listing of contact organizations and peo-
21 ple for obtaining such references. The Office shall
22 also maintain in electronic form the full texts of se-
23 lected references and make such references available
24 to the public through online services.

1 (9) ALTERNATIVE PRODUCT BANK FOR INDUS-
2 TRIES AND FIRMS.—The Office shall establish a
3 databank of potentially commercializable tech-
4 nologies and products matched to the capabilities of
5 defense-dependent industries and firms. Such
6 databank shall include a short overview of market
7 potential and shall identify potential programs in
8 Federal, State and local governments that may be
9 available to support technology development, deploy-
10 ment, and commercialization in these specific areas.

11 (b) MULTIPLE POINTS OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO
12 DATABASES.—

13 (1) EASY ACCESS.—The Office shall establish
14 several mechanisms to assure easy access by the
15 public and others to such databases, and to assure
16 that the databases be as accessible, user-friendly,
17 culturally neutral, and affordable as possible. In ad-
18 dition, the Office shall conduct an extensive outreach
19 to States and communities, especially in the most
20 defense-dependent regions of the Nation, and to a
21 wide range of constituencies, including State and
22 local government officials, chambers of commerce,
23 industrial organizations, labor unions, and commu-
24 nity organizations, to publicize the existence of
25 databanks and other assistance and services pro-

1 vided by this Act, and how to acquire such assist-
2 ance and services, and access such databanks.

3 (2) 1-800-TOLL FREE NUMBER.—The Office
4 shall establish a toll free 1-800 number to provide
5 a first point of entry into the Office information
6 database system. An individual calling such number
7 shall receive information on how to use the Office
8 databases, how to receive printed materials, and how
9 to contact appropriate people in other governmental
10 agencies for information about specific programs,
11 and answer other requests regarding services of the
12 Office.

13 (3) ONLINE ELECTRONIC ACCESS THROUGH
14 NETWORK.—Databases established by the Office
15 shall be easily accessible through existing computer
16 networks and publicly available computer database
17 access facilities, such as at repository libraries and
18 by direct call-in via modem, and shall be menu-driv-
19 en and highly user-friendly.

20 (4) PRINTED MANUALS AND ORIENTATION MA-
21 TERIALS.—The Office shall develop and make avail-
22 able to the public and others a printed manual, and
23 other printed material, reviewing the major Federal
24 agencies and programs engaged in economic adjust-
25 ment, defense conversion, and technology invest-

1 ments. It shall also serve as a guide to using the
2 databases and services of the Office, list State and
3 local contacts and resources, and include a bibliog-
4 raphy of major reference materials.

5 (5) ORIENTATION WORKSHOPS.—The Office
6 shall offer periodic workshops (1–2 weeks long)
7 available to selected representatives from defense-de-
8 pendent communities, businesses, and occupational
9 groups, to orient and train them in using the Office
10 and the services of the Office.

11 (6) INFORMATION SPECIALISTS.—The Office
12 shall maintain on-call economic adjustment and con-
13 version information specialists to address special
14 problems requiring person-to-person assistance, as
15 needed.

16 (c) PROGRAM EVALUATION.—

17 (1) REVIEW.—The Office shall conduct a regu-
18 lar review of the various agencies and programs in
19 the Federal system involving economic adjustment
20 and defense conversion. Such review shall evaluate
21 the procedures of these agencies and programs, and
22 the success of their activities. Such reviews shall be
23 based on periodic surveys of both Federal officials
24 and recipients of assistance pursuant to this Act.
25 The Office shall identify problems with the programs

1 and barriers to entry, for inclusion in the databases
2 established pursuant to this Act. Such review shall
3 include recommendations for improving such pro-
4 grams.

5 (2) **COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES.**—The Office
6 shall conduct, on an annual basis, consultative meet-
7 ings and briefings with defense-impacted constitu-
8 encies drawn from local and State governments,
9 business, labor, community and public interest orga-
10 nizations and academic institutions. Such meetings
11 and briefings shall be held in all major defense-de-
12 pendent regions of the United States, both to intro-
13 duce its programs and receive comments and rec-
14 ommendations concerning its services and how to ex-
15 pand and improve them.

16 **SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE.**

17 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established the
18 Interagency Economic Conversion Information Coordinat-
19 ing Committee (referred to in this section as the “Commit-
20 tee”).

21 (b) **MEMBERS.**—The members of the Committee are
22 as follows:

23 (1) Director of the Office, who shall serve as
24 Chairperson of the Committee.

1 (2) One Member appointed by the Secretary of
2 Housing and Urban Development.

3 (3) One Member appointed by the Secretary of
4 Transportation.

5 (4) Director of the Economic Development Ad-
6 ministration.

7 (5) Director of the Office of Economic Adjust-
8 ment, Department of Defense.

9 (6) One member appointed by the Secretary of
10 Labor.

11 (7) Director of the Advanced Research Projects
12 Agency, Department of Defense.

13 (8) Director of the National Institute for
14 Standards and Technology.

15 (9) Director of the Small Business Administra-
16 tion.

17 (10) One member appointed by the Director of
18 the National Economic Council.

19 (c) FUNCTIONS.—It shall be the function of the Com-
20 mittee—

21 (1) to advise and make recommendations to the
22 Office in carrying out the purposes of this Act;

23 (2) to coordinate and facilitate the information
24 gathering and monitoring activities of the Office
25 among Federal departments and agencies;

1 (3) to help the Office prepare and present infor-
2 mation in a manner that is publicly accessible, af-
3 fordable, and user-friendly; and

4 (4) to assist the Office in making technical as-
5 sistance personnel available as needed.

6 (d) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—All members of
7 the Committee shall serve without compensation in addi-
8 tion to that received for their services as officers or em-
9 ployees of the United States.

10 (e) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Com-
11 mittee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem
12 in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees
13 of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5,
14 United States Code, while away from their homes or regu-
15 lar places of business in the performance of services for
16 the Committee.

17 (f) STAFF.—The Chairman of the Committee may re-
18 quest any Federal department or agency to detail such
19 employees to the Committee as may be necessary to enable
20 the Committee to perform its duties.

21 (g) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Any
22 Federal Government employee may be detailed to the
23 Committee without reimbursement, and such detail shall
24 be without interruption or loss of civil service status or
25 privilege.

1 (h) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-
2 TENT SERVICES.—The Chairman of the Committee may
3 procure temporary and intermittent services under section
4 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individ-
5 uals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual
6 rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive
7 Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

8 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION.**

9 (a) STARTUP AND OPERATING EXPENSES.—For fis-
10 cal year 1994, there are authorized to be appropriated
11 such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the provi-
12 sions of this Act.

13 (b) OPERATING EXPENSES.—For fiscal year 1995,
14 and each fiscal year thereafter, there are authorized to be
15 appropriated such amounts as may be necessary to carry
16 out the provisions of this Act.

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