

Fiscal Highlights

New Fiscal Note System - Stan Eckersley

Last session, the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst implemented a new fiscal note system for agencies. This year, both the Legislature and the analysts get a new system too.

Lawmakers were introduced to it during interim caucus meetings on September 17, 2014, and so far, all the feedback has been positive. Legislators can now respond to fiscal notes electronically using their laptops, tablets, or smart phones. They can also look up the status of any of their bills getting a fiscal note.

The new system for the Fiscal Analyst's Office is expected to automate the fiscal note process. This will free time for analysis and writing. Both quality and speed should improve.

There is a limit as to how much faster we can go with fiscal notes. Since 2008, we've gone from 65% to 94.4% on-time and our goal is 95%. We're holding that last five percent to accommodate the big complicated bills that can't be done very well in the 72 hours allotted. If we have to choose, we would rather be accurate than on-time.

Looking forward, now that everything is on-line, we can integrate the budget systems (Meribah and COBI), appropriations-bill writing, after session reporting, and fiscal note systems.