

Commission on Streamlining Government

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Roy O. Martin, *Vice Chair*
Angele Davis, Commissioner of
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STREAMLINING GOVERNMENT COMMISSION TAKES NEXT STEPS TO MAKE STATE GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT

The Commission on Streamlining Government convened Tuesday in Baton Rouge to take the next steps to make Louisiana government more efficient and less costly. The 10-member commission, led by Sen. Jack Donahue, received a report from the Division of Administration outlining the functions, organizational structure, goals and initiatives, and recommendations for reducing costs for 20 cabinet-level departments. Commissioner of Administration Angele Davis, a member of the streamlining commission described the report as a "starting point" for the commission to review and analyze current government structure and operations.

As Chairman Donahue noted, "Budget cuts are going to happen. The role of the streamlining commission is to insure that the budget cuts are made intelligently, carefully and with some guidelines. This initial information from the state departments will help us in that effort."

The commission will continue its aggressive efforts to reduce the cost of government and improve the delivery of services to citizens with the pro-bono support of SSA Consultants, an organizational development firm, and the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, a research center dedicated to bridging the gap between academic research and public policy. Mercatus Center Vice-President Maurice McTigue, a former member of the New Zealand Parliament, led an ambitious and successful effort to restructure New Zealand's government. He said the Mercatus Center offered its assistance to the commission because the center considers Louisiana a "trailblazer" in efforts to reform government. In response to questions from commission member Treasurer John Kennedy about New Zealand's government reform efforts, McTigue noted, "You have to learn to trust the people. Do things that make it attractive for young people to stay or come back to your state. That will be the measure of your success. " McTigue pointed to New Zealand's population growth of 1.5 million over the last 15 years after the government's significant reorganization.

Five advisory committees will assist the streamlining commission's efforts: Efficiency and Benchmarking led by Treasurer Kennedy and commission member Leonal Harman; Outsourcing and Privatization led by commission members Roy O. Martin and Rep. Brett

Geymann; Information Technology Integration led by Sen. Mike Michot and Commissioner of Administration Angele Davis; Elimination of Duplicate and Non-Essential Services led by commission member Barry Erwin and Sen. Donahue; and Civil Service and Employee Benefits led by Rep. Jim Morris and commission member Lansing Kolb. Three of the advisory committees held their initial meetings Tuesday.

Commission members also received a report from Alvarez Marsal, the organization that helped restructure the Orleans Parish School system and the LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. Alvarez Marsal representatives estimate the restructuring of the LSU Medical Center will result in annual savings totaling \$70 million.

The next meeting of the Commission on Streamlining Government is scheduled for September 1 - 2 in Baton Rouge. State agency heads will present five-minute, no-frills reports outlining ways they can reduce costs and improve efficiencies in their departments. Sen. Donahue told commission members to "Bring your lunch, because we are not going to stop. We will stay until we hear all reports." The commission is facing a December 15th deadline to submit its initial recommendations to the governor and the legislature.

Additional information regarding the work of the Commission on Streamlining Government is available on the web at <http://senate.legis.state.la.us/streamline/>.

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