

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 57th Legislature (2019)

3 HOUSE BILL 1431

By: Loring

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to corporations; enacting the
8 Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act; stating
9 applicability; stating resolution for conflicting
10 laws; permitting state banks or trust companies to be
11 benefit corporations; clarifying applicability of
12 laws for state banks or trust companies; prohibiting
13 inconsistent provisions in the certificate or bylaws;
14 defining terms; requiring certain benefit corporation
15 to comply with the Oklahoma General Corporation Act;
16 prescribing statement for certificate of
17 incorporation; requiring bank or trust company
18 benefit corporation to comply with the Oklahoma
19 Banking Code; prescribing certificate statement;
20 providing for certificate amendment to become benefit
21 corporation; requiring minimum vote for amendment;
22 mandating minimum vote for merger, consolidation or
23 conversion; providing exception; allowing certificate
24 amendment to terminate status as benefit corporation;
requiring minimum vote for amendment; providing
exception; mandating minimum vote for sale or
disposition of all assets; directing benefit
corporation to have a purpose; authorizing
certificate to identify purpose; permitting
certificate amendment to change purpose; requiring
minimum vote for amendment; construing provision;
listing factors for directors to consider; exempting
consideration from constituting certain violations;
limiting personal liability for directors; exempting
director duty to individual beneficiary; clarifying
good-faith standard for benefit corporation director;
listing duties for benefit corporation officers;
limiting personal liability of officers; exempting
officer duty to individual beneficiary; specifying
good-faith standard for officers; prohibiting actions
against a benefit corporation or its directors or

1 officers; providing exception; excluding money
2 damages for failure to pursue or create benefit;
3 specifying conditions for benefit enforcement
4 proceeding; directing benefit corporation to give
5 annual benefit statement to shareholders; specifying
6 contents of annual benefit statement; exempting audit
7 requirement for benefit statement; authorizing
8 certificate to require certain disclosures related to
9 the benefit statement; prescribing timing for benefit
10 statement; providing for codification; and providing
11 an effective date.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1201 of Title 18, unless there
is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma
Benefit Corporation Act". This act shall be applicable to all
benefit corporations.

B. The existence of a provision of this act shall not of
itself create an implication that a contrary or different rule is
applicable to a corporation that is not a benefit corporation. This
act shall not affect a statute or rule that is applicable to a
corporation that is not a benefit corporation.

C. Except as otherwise provided in this act, the Oklahoma
General Corporation Act shall be generally applicable to all benefit
corporations that are not state banks or trust companies. A benefit
corporation that is not a state bank or trust company may be subject

1 simultaneously to this act and the Oklahoma General Corporation Act,
2 Professional Entity Act and other applicable business formation
3 statutes; however, the provisions of this act shall control over the
4 provisions of the Oklahoma General Corporation Act, Professional
5 Entity Act and other applicable business formation statutes where
6 there is a conflict.

7 D. Except as otherwise provided in this act, the Oklahoma
8 Banking Code shall be generally applicable to all benefit
9 corporations that are state banks or trust companies. A benefit
10 corporation that is a state bank or trust company may be subject
11 simultaneously to this act and the Oklahoma Banking Code; however,
12 the provisions of this act shall control over the provisions of the
13 Oklahoma Banking Code where there is a conflict.

14 E. A provision of the certificate of incorporation or bylaws
15 of a benefit corporation shall not limit, be inconsistent with or
16 supersede a provision of this act.

17 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
18 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1202 of Title 18, unless there
19 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

20 As used in the Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act:

21 1. "Benefit corporation" means:

22 a. a business corporation incorporated under the Oklahoma
23 General Corporation Act that is subject to this act,
24 or

1 b. a state bank or trust company incorporated under Title
2 6 of the Oklahoma Statutes that is subject to this
3 act;

4 2. "Benefit enforcement proceeding" means any claim or action
5 or proceeding for:

6 a. failure of a benefit corporation to pursue or create
7 general public benefit or a specific public benefit
8 purpose set forth in its certificate of incorporation,
9 or

10 b. violation of any obligation, duty or standard of
11 conduct under this act;

12 3. "General public benefit" means a material positive impact on
13 society and the environment, taken as a whole, assessed against a
14 third-party standard, from the business and operations of a benefit
15 corporation;

16 4. "Minimum status vote" means:

17 a. in the case of a business corporation or a state bank
18 or trust company, in addition to any other required
19 approval or vote, the satisfaction of the following
20 conditions:

21 (1) the shareholders of every class or series shall
22 be entitled to vote as a class on the corporate
23 action regardless of a limitation stated in the
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1 certificate of incorporation or bylaws on the
2 voting rights of any class or series, and
3 (2) the corporate action shall be approved by the
4 affirmative vote of the shareholders of each
5 class or series entitled to cast at least two-
6 thirds (2/3) of the votes that all shareholders
7 of the class or series are entitled to cast on
8 the action,

9 b. in the case of a domestic entity other than a
10 corporation or state bank or trust company, in
11 addition to any other required approval, vote or
12 consent, the satisfaction of the following conditions:

13 (1) the holders of every class or series of equity
14 interest in the entity that are entitled to
15 receive a distribution of any kind from the
16 entity shall be entitled to vote on or consent to
17 the action regardless of any otherwise applicable
18 limitation on the voting or consent rights of any
19 class or series, and

20 (2) the action shall be approved by the affirmative
21 vote or consent of the holders described in
22 division (1) of this subparagraph entitled to
23 cast at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes or
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1 consents that all of those holders are entitled
2 to cast on the action; and

3 5. "Specific public benefit" includes:

- 4 a. providing low-income or underserved individuals or
5 communities with beneficial products or services,
- 6 b. promoting economic opportunity for individuals or
7 communities beyond the creation of jobs in the normal
8 course of business,
- 9 c. protecting or restoring the environment,
- 10 d. improving human health,
- 11 e. promoting the arts, sciences or advancement of
12 knowledge,
- 13 f. increasing the flow of capital to entities with a
14 purpose to benefit society or the environment, and
- 15 g. conferring any other particular benefit on society or
16 the environment.

17 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
18 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1203 of Title 18, unless there
19 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

20 A. A benefit corporation that is not a state bank or trust
21 company shall be incorporated in accordance with the Oklahoma
22 General Corporation Act, except that its certificate of
23 incorporation shall also state that it is a benefit corporation.
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1 B. A benefit corporation that is a state bank or trust company
2 shall be incorporated in accordance with the Oklahoma Banking Code,
3 except that its certificate of incorporation shall also state that
4 it is a benefit corporation.

5 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
6 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1204 of Title 18, unless there
7 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

8 A. An existing business corporation may become a benefit
9 corporation under the Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act by amending
10 its certificate of incorporation so that it contains, in addition to
11 the requirements of Title 6 or Title 18 of the Oklahoma Statutes, a
12 statement that the corporation is a benefit corporation. In order
13 to be effective, the amendment shall be adopted by at least the
14 minimum status vote.

15 B. 1. Except as provided in paragraph 2 of this subsection, if
16 a domestic entity that is not a benefit corporation is a party to a
17 merger, consolidation or conversion and the surviving, new or
18 resulting entity in the merger, consolidation or conversion is to be
19 a benefit corporation, the plan of merger, consolidation or
20 conversion shall be adopted or approved by the domestic entity by at
21 least the minimum status vote.

22 2. Paragraph 1 of this subsection shall not apply in the case
23 of a corporation that is a party to a merger if the shareholders of
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1 the corporation are not entitled to vote on the merger pursuant to
2 Section 1083 of Title 18 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

3 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1205 of Title 18, unless there
5 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 A. A benefit corporation may terminate its status and cease to
7 be subject to the Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act by amending its
8 certificate of incorporation to delete the provision required by
9 Sections 3 and 4 of this act to be stated in the certificate of a
10 benefit corporation. In order to be effective, the amendment shall
11 be adopted by at least the minimum status vote.

12 B. 1. Except as provided in paragraph 2 of this subsection, if
13 a plan of merger, consolidation or conversion would have the effect
14 of terminating the status of a business corporation as a benefit
15 corporation, the plan shall be adopted by at least the minimum
16 status vote in order to be effective.

17 2. Paragraph 1 of this subsection shall not apply in the case
18 of a corporation that is a party to a merger if the shareholders of
19 the corporation are not entitled to vote on the merger.

20 3. Any sale, lease, exchange or other disposition of all or
21 substantially all of the assets of a benefit corporation, unless the
22 transaction is in the usual and regular course of business, shall
23 not be effective unless the transaction is approved by at least the
24 minimum status vote.

1 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1206 of Title 18, unless there
3 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. A benefit corporation shall have a purpose of creating
5 general public benefit. This purpose is in addition to its purpose
6 under the Oklahoma General Corporation Act or the Oklahoma Banking
7 Code.

8 B. The certificate of incorporation of a benefit corporation
9 may identify one or more specific public benefits that it is the
10 purpose of the benefit corporation to create in addition to its
11 purposes under the Oklahoma General Corporation Act or the Oklahoma
12 Banking Code and subsection A of this section. The identification
13 of a specific public benefit under this subsection does not limit
14 the purpose of a benefit corporation to create general public
15 benefit under subsection A of this section.

16 C. The creation of general public benefit and specific public
17 benefit under subsections A and B of this section shall be in the
18 best interests of the benefit corporation.

19 D. A benefit corporation may amend its certificate of
20 incorporation to add, amend or delete the identification of a
21 specific public benefit that it is the purpose of the benefit
22 corporation to create. In order to be effective, the amendment
23 shall be adopted by at least the minimum status vote.

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1 E. A professional corporation that is a benefit corporation
2 shall not violate the Professional Entity Act by having the purpose
3 to create general public benefit or a specific public benefit.

4 F. A state bank or trust company that is a benefit corporation
5 shall not violate the Oklahoma Banking Code by having the purpose to
6 create general public benefit or a specific public benefit, but
7 nothing in the Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act shall eliminate,
8 diminish or supersede the duties of a benefit corporation that is a
9 state bank or trust company to operate safely and soundly in
10 accordance with applicable regulatory requirements.

11 SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
12 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1207 of Title 18, unless there
13 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

14 A. In discharging the duties of their respective positions and
15 in considering the best interests of the benefit corporation, the
16 board of directors, committees of the board and individual directors
17 of a benefit corporation:

- 18 1. Shall consider the effects of any action or inaction upon:
- 19 a. the shareholders of the benefit corporation,
 - 20 b. the employees and work force of the benefit
21 corporation, its subsidiaries and its suppliers,
 - 22 c. the interests of customers as beneficiaries of the
23 general public benefit or a specific public benefit
24 purpose of the benefit corporation,

- 1 d. community and societal factors, including those of
2 each community in which offices or facilities of the
3 benefit corporation, its subsidiaries or its suppliers
4 are located,
- 5 e. the local and global environment,
- 6 f. the short-term and long-term interests of the benefit
7 corporation, including benefits that may accrue to the
8 benefit corporation from its long-term plans and the
9 possibility that these interests may be best served by
10 the continued independence of the benefit corporation,
11 and
- 12 g. the ability of the benefit corporation to accomplish
13 its general public benefit purpose and any specific
14 public benefit purpose; and

15 2. May consider other pertinent factors or the interests of any
16 other group that they deem appropriate; but

17 3. Need not give priority to a particular interest or factor
18 referred to in paragraph 1 or 2 of this subsection over any other
19 interest or factor unless the benefit corporation has stated in its
20 certificate of incorporation its intention to give priority to
21 certain interests or factors related to the accomplishment of its
22 general public benefit purpose or of a specific public benefit
23 purpose identified in its certificate.

1 B. The consideration of interests and factors in the manner
2 provided by subsection A of this section shall not constitute a
3 violation of the duties of directors under the Oklahoma General
4 Corporation Act or, except as provided in subsection F of Section 6
5 of the act, the Oklahoma Banking Code.

6 C. Except as provided in the certificate of incorporation or
7 bylaws, a director is not personally liable for monetary damages
8 for:

9 1. Any action or inaction in the course of performing the
10 duties of a director under subsection A of this section if the
11 director was not interested with respect to the action or inaction;
12 or

13 2. Failure of the benefit corporation to pursue or create
14 general public benefit or specific public benefit.

15 D. A director shall not have a duty to a person that is a
16 beneficiary of the general public benefit purpose or a specific
17 public benefit purpose of a benefit corporation arising from the
18 status of the person as a beneficiary.

19 E. A director who makes a business judgment in good faith
20 fulfills the duty under this section if the director:

21 1. Is not interested in the subject of the business judgment;

22 2. Is informed with respect to the subject of the business
23 judgment to the extent the director reasonably believes to be
24 appropriate under the circumstances; and

1 3. Rationally believes that the business judgment is in the
2 best interests of the benefit corporation.

3 SECTION 8. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1208 of Title 18, unless there
5 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 A. Each officer of a benefit corporation shall consider the
7 interests and factors described in paragraph 1 of subsection A of
8 Section 7 of this act in the manner provided in paragraph 3 of
9 subsection A of Section 7 of this act if:

10 1. The officer has discretion to act with respect to a matter;
11 and

12 2. It reasonably appears to the officer that the matter may
13 have a material effect on the creation by the benefit corporation of
14 general public benefit or a specific public benefit identified in
15 the certificate of incorporation of the benefit corporation.

16 B. The consideration of interests and factors in the manner
17 provided in subsection A of this section shall not constitute a
18 violation of the duties of an officer, except as provided in
19 subsection F of Section 6 of this act.

20 C. Except as provided in the certificate of incorporation or
21 bylaws, an officer shall not be personally liable for monetary
22 damages for:

23 1. An action or inaction as an officer in the course of
24 performing the duties of an officer under subsection A of this

1 section if the officer was not interested with respect to the action
2 or inaction; or

3 2. Failure of the benefit corporation to pursue or create
4 general public benefit or specific public benefit.

5 D. An officer shall not have a duty to a person that is a
6 beneficiary of the general public benefit purpose or a specific
7 public benefit purpose of a benefit corporation arising from the
8 status of the person as a beneficiary.

9 E. An officer who makes a business judgment in good faith
10 fulfills the duty under this section if the officer:

11 1. Is not interested in the subject of the business judgment;

12 2. Is informed with respect to the subject of the business
13 judgment to the extent the officer reasonably believes to be
14 appropriate under the circumstances; and

15 3. Rationally believes that the business judgment is in the
16 best interests of the benefit corporation.

17 SECTION 9. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
18 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1209 of Title 18, unless there
19 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

20 A. Except in a benefit enforcement proceeding, no person shall
21 bring an action or assert a claim against a benefit corporation or
22 its directors or officers with respect to:

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1 1. Failure to pursue or create general public benefit or a
2 specific public benefit set forth in its certificate of
3 incorporation; or

4 2. Violation of an obligation, duty or standard of conduct
5 under the Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act or the Oklahoma Banking
6 Code.

7 B. A benefit corporation shall not be liable for monetary
8 damages under the Oklahoma Benefit Corporation Act or the Oklahoma
9 Banking Code for any failure of the benefit corporation to pursue or
10 create general public benefit or a specific public benefit.

11 C. A benefit enforcement proceeding may be commenced or
12 maintained only:

13 1. Directly by the benefit corporation; or

14 2. Derivatively in accordance with the Oklahoma General
15 Corporation Act or the Oklahoma Banking Code, as applicable, by:

16 a. a person or group of persons that owned beneficially
17 or of record at least two percent (2%) of the total
18 number of shares of a class or series outstanding at
19 the time of the act or omission complained of,

20 b. a director,

21 c. a person or group of persons that owned beneficially
22 or of record five percent (5%) or more of the
23 outstanding equity interests in an entity of which the
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1 benefit corporation is a subsidiary at the time of the
2 act or omission complained of, or

3 d. other persons as specified in the certificate of
4 incorporation or bylaws of the benefit corporation.

5 D. For purposes of this section, a person is the beneficial
6 owner of shares or equity interests if the shares or equity
7 interests are held in a voting trust or by a nominee on behalf of
8 the beneficial owner.

9 SECTION 10. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
10 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1210 of Title 18, unless there
11 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

12 A. A benefit corporation shall annually provide its
13 shareholders with a statement as to the corporation's promotion of
14 general public benefit and any specific public benefit identified in
15 the certificate of incorporation. The statement shall include:

16 1. The objectives the board of directors has established to
17 promote general public benefit and any specific public benefit;

18 2. The standards the board of directors has adopted to measure
19 the corporation's progress in promoting general public benefit and
20 any specific public benefit;

21 3. Objective factual information based on those standards
22 regarding the corporation's success in meeting the objectives for
23 promoting general public benefit and any specific public benefit;

24 and

1 4. An assessment of the corporation's success in meeting the
2 objectives and promoting general public benefit and any specific
3 public benefit.

4 B. The certificate of incorporation or bylaws of a benefit
5 corporation may require that the corporation:

6 1. Make the statement described in subsection A of this section
7 available to the public; and

8 2. Use a third-party standard in connection with or attain a
9 periodic third-party certification addressing the corporation's
10 promotion of general public benefit and any specific public benefit
11 identified in the certificate of incorporation.

12 C. The benefit statement and the assessment of the performance
13 of the benefit corporation in the benefit statement required by
14 subsection A of this section are not required to be audited or
15 certified by a third party.

16 D. A benefit corporation shall send its annual benefit
17 statement to each shareholder on the earlier of:

18 1. One hundred twenty (120) days following the end of the
19 fiscal year of the benefit corporation; or

20 2. The same time that the benefit corporation delivers any
21 other annual report to its shareholders.

22 SECTION 11. This act shall become effective November 1, 2019.

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