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CUTTING RED TAPE

Louisiana's Opportunity for Growth

180,858
regulatory restrictions on the books (2024)

10th
most regulated state in the country

2nd
among neighboring and peer states, behind Texas

25%
estimated discretionary; cuttable without a law change

THE PROBLEM

Louisiana's administrative code runs about **4.6 million words.** Reading it once would be a two-month, full-time job. No legislator, agency head, or small business owner can keep up with that. And much of it is outdated:

- **41 active regulations** still implement a federal job training program repealed in 1998.
- At least **129** regulations still require faxes, **21** require typewritten documents, and **11** reference telegrams.
- Water pollution permit applications must be "filed in triplicate"; solid waste operator filings need "an original and 12 copies" written in ink.

THE OPPORTUNITY

$14 billion

estimated gain from a 20% cut

Cutting red tape by 10 to 40 percent over three years could make Louisiana's economy **$4.1 billion to $42.1 billion larger by 2037.** Even a modest 20 percent cut would add an estimated $14 billion.

Red tape slows investment, start-ups, and wage growth, and raises prices. It hits small businesses and lower-income families hardest.

HOW LOUISIANA COMPARES

REGIONAL AND PEER STATES / 2024

State	Total restrictions	Per 1,000 residents	Total rank	Per 1,000 rank
Texas	274,469	8.9	1	6
Louisiana	**180,858**	**39.3**	**2**	**2**
Oklahoma	142,313	34.9	3	3
Mississippi	125,604	42.4	4	1
Tennessee	121,620	16.9	5	5
Alabama	117,041	22.6	6	4

IT'S BEEN DONE

Virginia cut about 35% of regulatory requirements, saving an estimated $1.4 billion a year and about $24,000 off the cost of building a new home. Its regulatory office runs with just four staff.

Idaho cut its regulatory restrictions by more than 50% using a one-in, two-out rule and regular review.

British Columbia cut about 40% in three years and went from economic laggard to leader.

WHAT LOUISIANA CAN DO

01 **Set a goal.** Announce a reduction target (such as 25%), measure the baseline, and track every agency's progress.

02 **Sunset old rules.** Regulations expire on a rolling basis unless agencies show they are still needed and working.

03 **One in, two out.** For every new regulation, retire or modify old ones to offset the burden.

04 **Use AI to review the code.** Flag obsolete, duplicative, and discretionary rules at scale, in a fraction of the time.

Key findings from *Regulatory Reform in Louisiana: An Opportunity for Greater Economic Growth*
Patrick A. McLaughlin • Pelican Institute for Public Policy & Pacific Legal Foundation • October 2026