

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2470

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions, February 28, 2002

Title: An act relating to plumbing contractors.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for plumbing contractors.

Sponsors: House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Conway, Campbell, Cairnes, Cooper, Hunt, Hurst, Quall, Armstrong, Delvin, Tokuda and Kenney).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 2/26/02, 2/28/02 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Fairley, Franklin, Gardner, Rasmussen, Regala and Winsley.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Deccio and Honeyford.

Staff: Matthew Adams (786-7784)

Background: The Department of Labor and Industries administers various state laws governing construction contracting and plumbing.

The plumbers' certification law requires those performing plumbing work to be certified by the department. Plumbers must meet certain experience and/or educational requirements and pass an examination to obtain the required certificate.

The contractor registration law requires construction contractors to register with the department. Contractors must also meet certain requirements relating to registration, bonding and insurance, and notice to customers. The registration requirements do not apply to certified plumbers unless they wish to advertise and bid for jobs.

Summary of Bill: Plumbing contractors are those who engage in, or who offer or advertise to engage in, plumbing work by way of trade or business. Plumbing contractors are prohibited from advertising, offering to do work, submitting a bid to do work, or performing plumbing work without being registered contractors.

Plumbing contractors must verify the hours worked by plumbing trainees and the proper supervision of such hours by certified plumbers. They are not, however, required to identify which hours a trainee works with a specific plumber.

The Department of Labor and Industries may audit the records of a plumbing contractor that verified trainee hours if the department demonstrates a likelihood of excessive or improper hours being reported. The department must limit its audit to records necessary to verify hours. Information obtained from a plumbing contractor in an audit is confidential and not subject to public disclosure.

The department may issue a notice of infraction if a plumbing contractor is not a registered contractor. The department may also issue a notice of infraction under either the plumbing law or the contractor registration law if a plumbing contractor does not accurately verify trainee hours or if such hours were not properly supervised.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill parallels current registration requirements for electrical contractors and is very important to the plumbing industry. Registered contractors do not maintain accurate records on trainees who cost less than plumbing contractors to hire. The Department of Labor and Industries and the Attorney General's Office have received complaints because no plumbers are working on-site. Stronger enforcement of plumbing contractors and trainees is needed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Pete Schmidt, Department of Labor and Industries; Dan Saxton, Washington State Association of Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Sprinkler Fitters; Charles Mitchel, Plumber Heating Cooling Contractors of Washington; Larry Stevens, Mechanical Contractors Association.