

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5802

PARTIAL VETO

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regulating telecommunications contractors and installations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Fairley, Hochstatter, Honeyford, Spanel and Franklin).

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: Wires and equipment that use, conduct, or operate on electrical current must conform to the state's electrical code. The Department of Labor and Industries regulates electrical wires and equipment through a permitting and inspection process.

In 1998, the Governor vetoed legislation exempting noncomposite fiber optic cables and persons working with structured communications cabling. The Governor's veto expressed concerns about safety and the scope of the exemption. In response the department convened an advisory committee of stakeholders to develop a new approach.

Summary: A telecommunications contractor license is required to install or maintain a telecommunications system, with limited exceptions. A telecommunications contractor must appoint a certified telecommunications administrator to be responsible for compliance with installation codes, obtaining permits and scheduling inspections. A surety bond or a cash deposit filed with the department is also required in case the contractor fails to meet any obligations arising out of the contractor's installation or maintenance of telecommunication systems. A contractor is required to maintain insurance or file an assigned account to cover injury or damage to property or individuals.

Permits and inspections are required for most non-residential installations. The composition of the electrical board is changed to include telecommunications specialists. The board is authorized to settle disputes over methods of installation or maintenance of telecommunications materials and equipment. The board is also authorized to review and reverse any license or certificate suspensions or revocations, or penalties imposed by the department for violations of its telecommunications regulations.

Violations of the licensing and regulatory provisions of the bill may result in a minimum \$100 penalty and a maximum \$10,000 penalty. Noncompliance with requirements may result in the revocation or suspension of a contractor's license or administrator's certificate. Cities or towns may enact and enforce telecommunication standards that are equal to, higher than, or better than the department's and disputes with the department over such standards are subject to arbitration.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	38	10
House	98	0

Effective: June 8, 2000

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed section 203 which expressed the Legislature's intent that the department administer the act without expanding its oversight of telecommunications projects, through regulations, beyond the expressed authority granted by the act.