

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1557

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, March 29, 2005

Title: An act relating to expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Brief Description: Expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Ericks, Kessler, Campbell, Blake, Simpson, Ormsby, Morrell, Chase, P. Sullivan and Kenney.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/08/05, 66-32.

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 3/24/05, 3/29/05 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Brown, Keiser and Prentice.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hewitt and Honeyford.

Staff: John Dziedzic (786-7784)

Background: The Electrical Board advises the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) on all matters pertaining to the establishment and enforcement of standards for electrical and telecommunications installation. The Board is composed of the following 14 members appointed by the Governor:

- one employee/officer of a electric power generating or distributing entity;
- one employee/officer of a facilities-based telecommunications service provider;
- three licensed electrical contractors, one of which may be a trade association representative;
- one licensed telecommunications contractor;
- one employee/officer of an electrical/telecommunications equipment manufacturer or distributor;
- one representative of the public, with knowledge of, but not related to, the electrical industry;
- three certified electricians;
- one telecommunications worker;
- one licensed electrical engineer, designated as communications distribution designer; and
- one non-voting building official from a city with an electrical inspection program.

An outside line worker is typically an employee of an electric utility, or of an electrical contractor retained by a private owner-customer of the utility, who constructs, repairs, or maintains electric transmission and distribution facilities outside of a building. An outside line worker is not required to be a certified electrician or licensed electrical contractor.

Summary of Bill: One new position, representing outside line workers, is created on the Electrical Board, to be appointed by the Governor within 90 days of the effective date of the act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: It is appropriate and necessary for outside line workers to be members of the Electrical Board to protect their interests. The Board needs the expertise that an outside line worker can provide. There is already a management person for the businesses that employ outside line workers; it seems only fair that an outside line worker should also sit on the Board. The Board membership is currently nine to four in favor of management; adding a worker to the Board would go towards balancing the membership a bit more.

Testimony Against: A large portion of the Electrical Board's duties is to certify electricians. Outside line workers have consistently refused to be certified. There would be no purpose served by having someone representing outside line workers sit on the Board since they refused to be certified. Since outside line workers are not covered by the Board, there is no reason to have one sit on the Board. The Board deals with the National Electrical Code and this Code does not apply to outside line workers. The Board has purview over a number of new specialties and there are no current members representing those areas; the Board has no purview over outside line workers so why should a member representing that group sit on the Board?

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Conway, prime sponsor; Collins Sprague, Avista Corp.; Don Guillot, International brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Mark Grunwald, Washington State Association of Electrical Workers.

CON: Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractor's Association; Gary Smith, International Business Association.