

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6409

As Passed House:
March 3, 2020

Title: An act relating to providing an exemption from electrical licensing, certification, and inspection for industrial equipment.

Brief Description: Providing an exemption from electrical licensing, certification, and inspection for industrial equipment.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce (originally sponsored by Senator King).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 2/20/20, 2/24/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/20, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides an exemption from electrical licensing, certification, and inspection requirements for certain work on industrial equipment.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Chapman, Vice Chair; Mosbrucker, Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Hoff and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Lily Smith (786-7175).

Background:

All wires, equipment, and installations that convey electric current must conform with the electrical laws of the state, which are administered by the Department of Labor and Industries (Department). Electrical installations must comply with the National Electrical

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Code. Generally, an electrical contractor license is required to engage in the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to convey electric current, or equipment to be operated by electric current, and a certified electrician must perform the work. To be certified, an electrician must meet certain experience and education requirements.

Certain wires and equipment are exempt from the standards, as well as the licensing and certification requirements. These exemptions include equipment exempt from the National Electrical Code and electric utility-owned equipment between a meter base and meter.

Electrical work requires a permit and an inspection. The Department issues permits and inspects electrical installations. However, cities are authorized to enact ordinances or rules regulating electrical installations within their boundaries that are equal to, or higher, than the state standards for electrical work. If a city adopts its own electrical ordinance and enforces a standard, permitting and inspections are performed by the city instead of the Department.

Summary of Bill:

An exemption from electrical licensing, certification, and inspection requirements is provided for the maintenance, repair, or replacement of components and the disconnection and reconnection of existing low voltage digital control system connections within the confines of the manufacturer's industrial equipment. The exemption applies to entities and certain engineers and service technicians employed by the manufacturer.

Except for disconnection and reconnection of existing low voltage digital control system connections, the exemption does not include:

- installation, maintenance, repair, disconnection, or reconnection of any premises wiring or electrical equipment connected to industrial equipment;
- on-site assembly of industrial equipment; or
- electrical interconnections between industrial equipment units.

Modifications may not include any changes to the original intended equipment configuration.

"Industrial equipment" means utilization equipment that is:

- fully assembled at the manufacturer's facility;
- self-contained on a single skid or frame;
- of a type that conforms to applicable standards or is indicated as acceptable by the standards of an electrical product testing laboratory; and
- directly used in manufacturing or industrial process not accessible to the public.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill is simple and well-supported and is very defined on where and how work can be done on industrial equipment. The work done on this equipment is more mechanical, and unlikely to deal directly with wires. Service technicians on this type of equipment face a problem even under a liberal interpretation of current law, because they can't get the required hours in of work to sit for an electrical exam, as the work is mostly mechanical. They do not really belong in the electrical category and should have an exemption.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) There was some consternation with the bill that has since been resolved.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator King, prime sponsor; and James King, Beckwith & Kuffel.

(Other) Keith Weir, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 46.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.