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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1526**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Fosse, Maycumber, Ramel, Berry, Cortes, Bronoske, Peterson, Slatter, Ormsby, Doglio, Macri, Reed, and Riccelli)

AN ACT Relating to state electrical inspectors' salaries; and amending RCW 19.28.321.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 19.28.321 and 2007 c 218 s 84 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The director of labor and industries of the state of Washington and the officials of all incorporated cities and towns where electrical inspections are required by local ordinances shall have power and it shall be their duty to enforce the provisions of this chapter in their respective jurisdictions. The director of labor and industries shall appoint a chief electrical inspector and may appoint other electrical inspectors as the director deems necessary to assist the director in the performance of the director's duties. The chief electrical inspector, subject to the review of the director, shall be responsible for providing the final interpretation of adopted state electrical standards, rules, and policies for the department and its inspectors, assistant inspectors, electrical plan examiners, and other individuals supervising electrical program personnel. If a dispute arises within the department regarding the interpretation of adopted state electrical standards, rules, or policies, the chief electrical inspector, subject to the review of the director, shall provide the final interpretation of the disputed standard, rule, or policy. All electrical inspectors appointed by the director of labor and industries shall have not less than: Four years experience as journeyperson electricians in the electrical construction trade installing and maintaining electrical wiring and equipment, or two years electrical training in a college of electrical engineering of recognized standing and four years continuous practical electrical experience in installation work, or four years of electrical training in a college of electrical engineering of recognized standing and two years continuous practical electrical experience in electrical installation work; or four years experience as a journeyperson electrician performing the duties of an electrical inspector employed by the department or a city or town with an approved inspection program under RCW 19.28.141, except that for work performed in accordance with the national electrical safety code and covered by this chapter, such inspections may be performed by a person certified as an outside journeyperson lineworker, under RCW 19.28.261(5)(b), with four years experience or a person with four years experience as a certified outside journeyperson lineworker performing the duties of an electrical inspector employed by an electrical utility.

(2)(a) Such state inspectors shall be paid ((~~such~~)) at least the statewide average of the prevailing rate of wage, excluding usual benefits and overtime, in the applicable scope of work for journey level electricians certified under this chapter, as determined by the department under chapter 39.12 RCW or a salary as the director of labor and industries shall determine, together with their travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended, whichever amount is higher. When determining the statewide average for purposes of this subsection, the department shall use as the denominator the number of wage rates across all counties in the same trade or occupation and not the wage rate for each individual county. Wage rates under this subsection shall be adjusted at the same time as prevailing wage rates under chapter 39.12 RCW.

(b) Beginning December 1, 2024, and each December 1st thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature providing the following information: (i) The increase in the number of electrical inspectors hired after changes to inspector salaries were made under (a) of this subsection; (ii) any increase, decrease, or other changes in the department's response time to requests for electrical inspections; (iii) any increase, decrease, or other changes in the wait times for electrical inspections; (iv) any increase, decrease, or other changes to the utilization of virtual electrical inspections; and (v) any barriers to virtual electrical inspections and recommendations to reduce those barriers and increase the number of virtual inspections conducted by the department.

(3) As a condition of employment, inspectors hired exclusively to perform inspections in accordance with the national electrical safety code must possess and maintain certification as an outside journeyperson lineworker.

(4) The expenses of the director of labor and industries and the salaries and expenses of state inspectors incurred in carrying out the provisions of this chapter shall be paid entirely out of the electrical license fund, upon vouchers approved by the director of labor and industries.

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