

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 2053

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to electrical licensing exemptions.

Brief Description: Exempting electrical utilities and contractors from licensing requirements for certain work involving electrical transmission lines.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Heavey, Fuhrman, G. Fisher, Grant, D. Sommers, Cooper, Mielke, Wood, Orr, Day, Ludwig and Silver.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, March 5, 1991, DP;
Passed House, January 22, 1992, 96-2;
Passed Legislature.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE & LABOR**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Heavey, Chair; Cole, Vice Chair; Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Lisk, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jones; R. King; O'Brien; Prentice; Vance; and Wilson.

Minority Report: Without recommendation: Signed by 1 member: Representative Franklin.

Staff: Jim Kelley (786-7166).

Background: It is unlawful for any person or entity to engage in the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to convey electric current, or installing or maintaining equipment to be operated by electric current as it pertains to the electrical industry without having a valid electrical contractor's license issued by the Department of Labor and Industries. However, an electrical contractor's license is not required from a utility for the installation or maintenance of lines for transmission of electricity from the source of supply to the point of contact at the premises or property to be supplied.

This exemption does not apply to the installation or maintenance of power lines on the premises or property being supplied with power.

Summary of Bill: No license is required from any utility because of work in connection with the installation, repair, or maintenance of lines, wires, apparatus, and equipment owned by a commercial, industrial or public customer if: the equipment is an integral part of a transmission or distribution system providing service to such customer; the equipment is located outside of a structure; and the utility does not initiate the sale of services to perform such work.

No license is required from any utility because of work in connection with the installation, repair, or maintenance of lines and wires, together with ancillary apparatus, and equipment, owned by an independent power producer who has entered into an agreement for the sale of electricity to a utility and used in transmitting electricity from an on premises generating unit to the point of interconnection with the utility system.

No inspection is authorized of any wiring, appliance, device, equipment, or installation by any utility or any person employed by a utility in connection with the installation, repair, or maintenance of lines, wires, apparatus, or equipment owned by or under control of the utility. All electrical work completed by a utility or a contractor retained by a utility and falling within the National Electrical Code is subject to inspection by the Department of Labor and Industries.

No employee of a utility or employee of a contractor retained by a utility and performing utility type work needs to obtain a journeyman electrician certificate so long as he or she is registered with or has graduated from a state-approved outside lineman apprenticeship course and the Department of Labor and Industries recognizes that the apprenticeship course qualifies a person to perform such work.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill merely allows utilities to perform work that they have been performing for 30 years without a license. The department just recently began inspecting these facilities. The bill would clear up an ambiguity in the law.

Testimony Against: There are good reasons for people who do work on primary power lines to be licensed. It is sophisticated and dangerous work. There is no good reason to exempt some contractors from license requirements and not exempt others who do the same work.

Witnesses: Collins Sprague and Randy Cloward, Washington Water Power Company (in favor); Ray D. Warren, IBEW Local 77 (in favor); Joe Brewer, Department of Labor & Industries (neutral); Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association (opposed); and Ron Judd, IBEW Local 46 (had concerns).