

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 3003

April 2, 1998

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Engrossed House Bill No. 3003 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to exempting computer wires and fiber optic cables from electrical wiring requirements;"

This bill would exempt the installation of non-composite fiber optic cables from inspection, contractor licensing, and electrician certification, and would exempt the installation of structured communications cabling from contractor and electrician certification.

I believe that we should do everything we can to clear the way for the information highway. However, this bill may create safety problems. Fiber optic cable and structured communication cable control things such as medical diagnostic equipment, high voltage power distribution monitoring and control, banking access systems, environmental controls, traffic signal systems, express lane gates, surveillance equipment, ventilation systems, and other critical safety systems. Under this bill, installation of cables for these systems would be exempt from any licensing or certification skills requirements. Furthermore, as new technology spreads, we have no idea how electrical systems will interact with new fiber optic control systems. Also, this bill would allow non-conductive fiber cables to be installed in raceways that contain high voltage electrical wiring by people without a license or trainee certificate.

This bill is an ad hoc approach to the increasingly complex new world of wiring. I am directing the Department of Labor and Industries to convene an advisory committee that includes representatives of affected groups. That committee will study the inclusion of telecommunications infrastructure in Chapter 19.28 RCW, including licensing and certification, and make recommendations to my office next fall.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Engrossed House Bill No. 3003 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor