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Commerce & Labor Committee

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HB 1574

**Brief Description:** Applying RCW 41.56.430 through 41.56.490 to employees working under a site certificate issued under chapter 80.50 RCW.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Conway, Cooper and Fromhold.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Adds the operating and maintenance employees of an agency operating a commercial nuclear power plant to the employees covered by interest arbitration under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act.

**Hearing Date:** 2/12/03

**Staff:** Chris Cordes (786-7103).

**Background:**

Employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) administered by the Public Employment Relations Commission (Commission). For uniformed personnel, the PECBA recognizes the public policy against strikes as a means of settling labor disputes. To resolve impasses over contract negotiations involving these uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding arbitration.

The employees who are listed as uniformed personnel include, among others: fire fighters in all cities and counties and law enforcement officers in larger cities and counties, correctional security personnel employed in larger county jails, general authority peace officers and fire fighters employed by certain port districts, security forces at a nuclear power plant, and publicly employed advanced life support technicians. Other public employees covered by interest arbitration include state patrol officers and certain transit employees under the PECBA and ferry workers under the Marine Employees' Public Employment Relations Act.

Security forces employed by a joint operating agency at a nuclear power plant were added to the list of uniformed personnel in 1993. Under Commission decisions, a bargaining unit that includes both uniformed and nonuniformed personnel is considered inappropriate. Under a 1999 Commission decision, a single unit of personnel with various security functions

working for Energy Northwest (formerly the Washington Public Power Supply System) at both the Hanford and Satsop sites was divided into two new units with one unit of security forces covered by interest arbitration (all employed at the Hanford site) and another unit of the remaining employees (employed at both Hanford and Satsop). Energy Northwest also employs various other employees, including a bargaining unit of operating and maintenance personnel at the Hanford site.

**Summary of Bill:**

The interest arbitration provisions of the PECBA apply to operating and maintenance employees of an agency that, on the effective date of the bill, is operating a commercial nuclear power plant.

**Rules Authority:** The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule-making powers of an agency.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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