

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5550

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, March 1, 2005

Title: An act relating to expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Brief Description: Expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Keiser, Schoesler, Franklin, Doumit, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Hewitt, Brown, Jacobsen, Mulliken and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 2/14/05, 3/1/05 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Brown, Keiser and Prentice.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Honeyford.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Parlette.

Staff: John Dziedzic (786-7784)

Background: The Electrical Board advises the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) on all matters pertaining to the establishment and enforcement of standards for electrical and telecommunications installation. The Board is composed of the following 14 members appointed by the Governor:

- one employee/officer of a electric power generating or distributing entity;
- one employee/officer of a facilities-based telecommunications service provider;
- three licensed electrical contractors, one of which may be a trade association representative;
- one licensed telecommunications contractor;
- one employee/officer of an electrical/telecommunications equipment manufacturer or distributor;
- one representative of the public - with knowledge of, but not related to, the electrical industry;
- three certified electricians;

- one telecommunications worker;
- one licensed electrical engineer, designated as communications distribution designer; and
- one non-voting building official from a city with an electrical inspection program.

An outside line worker is typically an employee of an electric utility, or of an electrical contractor retained by a private owner-customer of the utility, who constructs, repairs, or maintains electric transmission and distribution facilities outside of a building. An outside line worker is not required to be a certified electrician or licensed electrical contractor.

Summary of Bill: One new position, representing outside line workers, is created on the Electrical Board, to be appointed by the Governor within 90 days of the effective date of the act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The work performed by outside linemen on high voltage electric power requires a similar level of intense training and experience as is required of electricians who work inside buildings. An electrical installation is not distinguished under the law on the basis of whether the installation is inside or outside a building. The Electrical Board currently considers rules affecting the scope of work of outside lineman.

Testimony Against: Outside lineman are not required to be certified electricians, and should not be in a position to oversee the development or implementation of regulations governing certified electricians. If a new position is to be added to the Electrical Board, several other regulated industries that currently do not have representation on the board should be considered instead. The Governor is currently authorized to appoint either an employee or an officer of a utility.

Who Testified: PRO: Don Guillot, Rob Carrigan, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 77; Ron Fuller, Dept. of L&I; Richard King, IBEW Local 646 et al.; Tracy Harness, Bill Stone, NW Line; Collins Sprague, Avista Corp.

CON: Harry Hubbard, Meredith Lambert, Claria Turner, Independent Electrical Contractors; Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Assn.