

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5491

As of January 31, 2007

Title: An act relating to the regulation of the plumbing profession.

Brief Description: Changing registration requirements for plumbing contractors.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Clements and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/30/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: To conduct plumbing work in this state, one must be certified by the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I). However, a contractor registered under RCW 18.27 can advertise, offer, or bid on a job and indicate that they will do the plumbing work without being certified as a plumber. A plumbing contractor is generally one who hires certified plumbers to conduct plumbing work.

Summary of Bill: Before advertising, offering, or bidding on a job that would require plumbing work, a contractor registered under RCW 18.27 must first have a unique contractor registration issued by L&I. This unique registration is to identify those contractors permitted to do plumbing work. L&I can charge a fee for this registration to cover its administrative costs in issuing the registration.

The term "contractor" is amended to be "plumbing contractor." No contractor can employ a person to engage in or offer to engage in the plumbing trade unless the contractor is a registered plumbing contractor and the person doing the plumbing work has a journeyman certificate, specialty certificate, temporary permit, or trainee certificate.

A person need not use a certified plumber to do plumbing work on his or her own residence, farm or business, unless the plumbing work is construction of a new building intended to be rented, leased, or sold. The person can be exempt from these requirements if he or she is building a new residential building with one to four units and provides L&I with a signed affidavit stating that he or she will reside in one of the units for 24 months. The owner may only receive this exemption once every 24 months

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2007.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill represents reasonable regulations that will better control the industry and provide L&I with better policing ability. Plumbers must be certified to protect the public. Unsafe plumbing conditions can cause serious health problems. The current law has been pretty successful in regulating the profession but there are a couple of loopholes and this bill attempts to close those loopholes. There have been real issues with people who flip or build houses and do their own plumbing work or hire uncertified plumbers to do the work.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; Pete Crow, Washington State Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters; Charly Mitchel, Mitchel Plumbing Company and Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors' Association; Larry Stevens, Mechanical Contractors' Association.