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**HOUSE BILL 2082**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Fosse, Low, Fitzgibbon, Berry, Reed, Ramel, Tharinger, Reeves, Paul, and Kloba

AN ACT Relating to assessing the needs of the electrical transmission industry; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) The department of commerce must conduct a study of the employment and workforce education needs of the electrical transmission industry in the state. The purpose of the study is to: Ascertain labor shortages; identify challenges in recruiting, hiring, and retaining workers in certain enumerated trades; evaluate workforce succession planning in the industry; and assess short-term and long-term training and workforce needs, in order to meet the need to expand electrical transmission capacity infrastructure to meet the state's climate goals.

(b) The study must focus on the following groups in the electrical transmission workforce: Line workers; line clearance tree trimmers; and substation technicians.

(c) The department of commerce may contract with a third-party entity familiar with conducting similar studies. In conducting the study, the department of commerce or a third-party entity may consult with the employment security department, the department of labor and industries, appropriate centers of excellence, higher education institutions, workforce development centers, utilities, and any other appropriate organizations or entities. To ensure duplication of efforts does not occur, the department of commerce or a third-party entity must coordinate with appropriate agencies and conduct a literature review of existing studies, data, or research related to the electrical transmission industry workforce that is currently ongoing or within the last five years.

(d) By December 1, 2024, the department of commerce must submit a preliminary report of the study to the appropriate committees of the legislature. At a minimum, the preliminary report must include the methodology that will be used to conduct the study and any demographic data or other information gathered regarding the electrical transmission industry workforce in preparation for the study.

(e) By November 1, 2025, the department of commerce must submit a final report to the appropriate committees of the legislature. At a minimum, the final report must include the following information:

(i) Estimates of electrical transmission industry jobs needed to expand electrical transmission capacity to meet the state's clean energy and climate goals inclusive of the workforce needed to maintain existing infrastructure;

(ii) An inventory of existing training programs and anticipated need for expansion of existing or additional training programs to meet current and future workforce needs;

(iii) The numbers of apprentices in the classifications listed under (b) of this subsection;

(iv) Demographic data, such as age, of the workforce;

(v) Identification of gaps and barriers to a full electrical transmission workforce pool including, but not limited to, the loss of workers to retirement in the next five, 10, and 15 years, and other current and anticipated retention issues;

(vi) A comparison of wages between different jurisdictions in the state and between Washington and other neighboring states, including any incentives offered by other states;

(vii) Any data on the number of workers in the classifications listed under (b) of this subsection that completed training in the state and left the state to work in a different state;

(viii) Data on the number of out-of-state workers who enter Washington to meet workforce needs on large scale electrical transmission projects in Washington;

(ix) Key challenges that could emerge in the foreseeable future based on factors such as growth in demand for electricity and changes in energy production and availability; and

(x) Recommendations for the training, recruitment, and retention of the current and anticipated electrical transmission workforce.

(2)(a) By November 1, 2024, the department of commerce must convene an electrical transmission industry work group. The purpose of the work group is to provide advice, develop strategies, and make recommendations on efforts to support the needs of the electrical transmission industry workforce to meet the state's climate goals.

(b) The work group must consist of eight members, as follows:

(i) One representative from a labor organization located in Tacoma that represents line workers;

(ii) One representative from a labor organization located in Clark county that represents line workers;

(iii) One representative from a labor organization located in Spokane county that represents line workers;

(iv) One representative from a statewide labor organization that represents workers in line construction and workers from outside of the line worker industry;

(v) Two representatives from two different for-profit utilities; and

(vi) Two representatives from two different public utility districts.

(c) The work group must:

(i) Review the preliminary and final reports submitted by the department of commerce under this section and, if appropriate, recommend to the legislature any legislative changes needed to address issues raised in the reports; and

(ii) Periodically review the status of the workforce issues and provide ongoing input and recommendations to the legislature, state and local agencies, labor, and utilities regarding the needs and challenges of the electrical transmission industry.

(3) All requirements in this section are subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for the specific purposes described.

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