S-0805.1

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**SENATE BILL 5545**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators MacEwen, King, and Mullet

AN ACT Relating to the requirements to obtain a journey level electrician certificate of competency; amending RCW 19.28.195; amending 2018 c 249 s 5 and 2020 c 153 ss 30 and 31 (uncodified); creating new sections; providing effective dates; providing expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that the enactment of Substitute Senate Bill No. 6126 (chapter 249, Laws of 2018) will significantly shift the state's approach to certifying journey level electricians. It will consolidate five education and training pathways to a single pathway, requiring the completion of an apprenticeship program for any person seeking certification as a journey level electrician. This change was slated to go into effect July 1, 2023, however, there are only 14 approved apprenticeship programs for journey level electricians in the state. While the department of labor and industries is unable to assess whether there is sufficient capacity in those programs for all current trainees, stakeholders estimate there are between 7,000 to 10,000 trainees working towards journey level certification who are not enrolled in an apprenticeship program. The legislature recognizes that apprenticeship programs are not yet available in many rural areas of the state, effectively requiring trainees residing in those areas to travel up to four hours per day in order to participate in a program. Therefore, the legislature intends to delay the effective date of the single-pathway approach from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2025, in order to provide more time for additional apprenticeship programs to be approved and for existing programs to be expanded to meet the demand of trainees and their employers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department of labor and industries shall conduct a study on the availability and accessibility of journey level electrical apprenticeship programs, including determining:

(a) The number and geographic locations of the programs and if they are union affiliated, nonunion affiliated with open enrollment, or single employer programs;

(b) The number and geographic locations of trainees currently enrolled in the programs;

(c) The number and geographic locations of trainees currently working towards qualifying for certification who are not yet enrolled in a program but who will need to enroll in a program in order to comply with the certification requirements of Substitute Senate Bill No. 6126 (chapter 249, Laws of 2018) by July 1, 2025; and

(d) The number and geographic locations of employers of trainees that will need to become registered training agents with a program in order for their trainee employees to be enrolled in a program, taking into account individual employer preferences to be a training agent for a union affiliated or nonunion affiliated program.

(2) In conducting the study, the department of labor and industries shall conduct a survey of current trainees and employers of electrical contractors no later than September 1, 2023. The department of labor and industries shall submit a report with its findings to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, by December 1, 2023.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.28.195 and 2018 c 249 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department may permit an applicant who obtained experience and training equivalent to a journey level apprenticeship program to take the examination if the applicant establishes that the applicant has the equivalent training and experience and demonstrates good cause for not completing the required minimum hours of work under standards applicable on July 1, ((~~2023~~)) 2025.

(2) This section expires July 1, ((~~2025~~)) 2027.

**Sec.**  2018 c 249 s 5 (uncodified) is amended to read as follows:

Sections 1 through 4 of this act take effect July 1, ((~~2023~~)) 2025.

**Sec.**  2020 c 153 s 30 (uncodified) is amended to read as follows:

Section 25 of this act expires July 1, ((~~2023~~)) 2025.

**Sec.**  2020 c 153 s 31 (uncodified) is amended to read as follows:

Section 26 of this act takes effect July 1, ((~~2023~~)) 2025.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1, 2025.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Except for section 3 of this act, this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

**--- END ---**