HOUSE BILL REPORT
SSB 5265

As Passed House:
April 10, 2025

Title: An act relating to expanding minimum requirements for electrical inspectors to include certain out-of-state experience.

Brief Description: Expanding minimum requirements for electrical inspectors to include certain out-of-state experience.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce (originally sponsored by Senators King, Boehnke, Chapman, Dozier and Harris).

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
Labor & Workplace Standards: 3/19/25, 3/28/25 [DP].
Floor Activity:
Passed House: 4/10/25, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands electrical inspector licensing requirements to allow for experience from certain other states.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Ybarra, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, McEntire, Obras and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

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

Subject to certain exceptions, a person performing installation, alteration, or maintenance of any electrical system or equipment must obtain an electrical work permit. The completed work is subject to inspection by a qualified inspector. The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) conducts electrical inspections, except within cities that have their own inspection programs.

All electrical inspectors must have:

- four years of experience as journey-level electricians in the electrical construction trade installing and maintaining electrical wiring equipment; or
- four years experience as a journey-level electrician performing the duties of an electrical inspector employed by the Department or a city or town with an approved inspection program.

Other requirements apply to work performed in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code.

Pursuant to legislation enacted in 2024, the Department and the Association of Washington Cities convened a work group to study alternate pathways to becoming an electrical inspector. The work group recommended that out-of-state experience be accepted to qualify as an electrical inspector and for the rate of pay for local electrical inspectors to be increased.

Summary of Bill:

The qualifications for electrical inspectors are expanded to include individuals who have:

- a journey-level electrician certificate issued by the Department of Labor and Industries (Department); and
- eight years of experience in the electrical construction trade installing and maintaining electrical wiring and equipment, four years of which occurred after obtaining a journey-level electrician license or certificate by examination from another state electrical licensing or certification authority that has a reciprocal licensing agreement with the Department for journey-level electricians.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a simple bill that implements the recommendations of the work group convened by the Department of Labor and Industries and the Association of Washington

Cities. There is a shortage of inspectors at both the state and local levels. This bill will allow inspectors in Oregon to work in Washington, which will double the pool of candidates. This bill is at the nexus of expansion and relevant experience. Inspections are important safety work that happens every day. This bill will be particularly helpful in communities that border Oregon. This bill will facilitate the permitting and inspection process, which will help address the housing crisis.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Curtis King, prime sponsor; Shree Thirunagari, City of Vancouver; and Matthew Hepner, IBEW/ceww.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.