

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1874

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Commerce & Labor, April 3, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to electrical inspections within county road rights of way.

**Brief Description:** Modifying electrical inspections within county road rights of way.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Robertson, O'Brien and Fisher.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Commerce & Labor: 4/1/97, 4/3/97 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Anderson and Newhouse.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Franklin, Fraser and Heavey.

**Staff:** Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

**Background:** In late 1995 the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) expanded the parameters of its inspections from examining the electrical service panel in county rights of way to inspecting the actual traffic signals, but failed to provide the necessary training to allow its inspectors to do so. Prior to this expansion, the counties had been installing, maintaining and inspecting traffic signals for over 20 years.

Exemptions from L&I electrical inspections are currently granted to incorporated cities, electricity supply agencies owned and operated by a city or town, and all rights of way along state highways, authorizing the Department of Transportation to construct and maintain materials, devices, appliances and equipment.

**Summary of Bill:** County road rights-of-way are exempt from L&I electrical inspections, provided the subject county road department maintains and enforces an equal, higher or better standard of construction, and materials, devices, appliances and equipment than is required by current law.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Cities in this state and the Department of Transportation are allowed to inspect their own traffic signals. Counties would like the same authority.

**Testimony Against:** There have been a number of cases in which local governments or state agencies who are allowed under current law to install and inspect their own electrical installations have been found to be using unlicensed individuals to do such work. As a result, dangerous installations of electrical materials has taken place. This bill would give counties the same right to install and inspect traffic signals and set up the same potential for abuse that has occurred under the exemptions provided under current law.

**Testified:** PRO: Representative Eric Robertson, prime sponsor; Eric Berger, County Road Administration Board; Christina Mudget, Snohomish County Public Works; Tom Ballard, Pierce County Engineering; Donald Anders, Washington Department of Transportation; CON: Michael Zenk, IBEW; Richard King, IBEW.