

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1575

As Reported by House Committee On:

Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Brief Description: Expanding membership of the electrical board by appointment of one outside line worker.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, DeBolt, Cooper, Fromhold, Crouse, Orcutt, Hudgins, Campbell, Berkey and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/12/03, 2/24/03 [DP].

<h4>Brief Summary of Bill</h4>

- Adds one outside line worker to the Electrical Board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Crouse, Hudgins, Kenney and McCoy.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Holmquist.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

Background:

State law requires that persons who install or maintain wires or equipment to convey electric current be licensed. This licensure requirement does not apply to utilities and persons employed by utilities who install, repair, and maintain lines, wires, apparatus, or equipment used to light streets or public areas, or to transmit or distribute electricity to customers. The workers who construct and maintain electric transmission and

distribution facilities are known as outside line workers.

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) licenses electrical contractors and certifies electrical administrators and electricians. The Department also regulates the installation, repair, and maintenance of electrical wires, equipment, and services.

The Electrical Board (Board) advises the Director of the Department on electrical and telecommunications installation standards, inspection procedures, and adoption of rules pertaining to electrical inspections. The Board also reviews appeals of license revocations and suspensions, as well as other citations.

The 13 voting members of the Board represent various segments of the electrical and telecommunications industries and the public. These members include one member who is an employee or officer of an entity generating or distributing electric power. The one nonvoting Board member is a city building official. These Board members are appointed by the Governor with the advice of the Director of the Department. The Secretary of the Board is the Chief Electrical Inspector.

The Board meets at least once each quarter. The Board members are compensated no more than \$50 per day for days in which they attend official meetings or perform official duties. They are also reimbursed for travel expenses. These costs are paid from the electrical license fund.

Summary of Bill:

One outside line worker is added as a voting member of the Electrical Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The work done by outside line workers is an important component of the electrical industry. That work can overlap with some of the work done by telecommunications contractors. There needs to be an effective interface with those who are installing fiber optic, for example. Without good communications, it is difficult to resolve problems in the gray areas. The utility companies already have a seat on the Board, so it makes sense to have a worker representative. The Board frequently makes decisions that impact outside line workers. The Department provides safety advice to both outside and inside line workers. The inside line workers now support the bill because of the concerns about the overlap with telecommunications work.

Testimony Against: The Board's jurisdiction is limited. It does not have jurisdiction over the statute governing outside line work because this work has been excluded from the electrical contractor/electrician chapter. Outside line workers have only a tangential interest in the areas subject to the Board's jurisdiction. The appointment for a "utility" representative could represent either management or employees of a utility. If the outside line workers are doing telecommunications work, they could be appointed as telecommunications representatives. If the door is opened too wide, there will be many other groups who feel that they should have representation on the Board. If one more voting member is added, the potential exists for Board impasse on issues.

Testified: (In support) John Snyder, Marc Anderson, and Richard King, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and Larry Smith, National Electrical Contractors Association, Line Constructors Chapter.

(Opposed) Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association; and Gary Smith, Independent Business Association.