

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1952

As Reported by House Committee On: Labor & Workplace Standards

Title: An act relating to enforcement of the electrical laws.

Brief Description: Concerning enforcement of the electrical laws.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, J. Walsh, Pellicciotti, Chapman, Stambaugh and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 2/13/17, 2/16/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits cities that conduct electrical inspections to enforce electrical licensing and certification requirements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Doglio and Frame.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; McCabe, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Pike.

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

Persons who engage in the electrical business must obtain a license as an electrical contractor, and electricians must qualify for and be issued a certificate of competency. Persons engaged in the telecommunications business must be licensed as telecommunications contractors. Apprentices and other persons learning the electrical trade must obtain a training certificate, and must work under supervision of a certified electrician and under a specified ratio of trainees to certified electricians. The Department of Labor and Industries

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

(Department) administers and enforces the licensing and certification requirements. A person who engages in the electrical business without being licensed is subject to a \$50 to \$10,000 civil penalty. A person who violates the supervision requirements, employs a person without a certificate to perform electrical work, or who performs electrical work without a certificate is subject to a \$50 to \$500 civil penalty. The Department may issue a penalty of \$100 to \$10,000 to a person who engages in the telecommunications business without a license.

Electrical installations must comply with the national electrical code, and a permit and inspection is generally required for electrical work. Cities may adopt ordinances with an equal or higher standard than required by the state for electrical work. If a city adopts such an ordinance and enforces a standard, inspections are performed by the city rather than the Department. About 25 cities have electrical ordinances and perform inspections.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Cities that conduct electrical inspections may enforce the electrical laws related to electrical contractor licensing, and electrician certification and trainees. The penalties are the same as penalties the state imposes. The authority of the Department to enforce these laws is retained.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes the city enforcement permissive rather than mandatory and makes technical corrections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill would give cities a tool to enforce the laws and would allow cities to retain the fines. A contractor was working out of ratio in Seattle with 14 or 15 trainees to one electrician and was doing so as a business model. This would not have happened if the city had authority to enforce the laws. The contractor was fined \$177,000 by the Department. Proponents are comfortable making the language permissive.

(Opposed) Cities did not participate in development of the bill and need more time to analyze it. It could have a significant fiscal impact and is also unclear. Cities are willing to work with the proponents.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Matthew Hepner, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

(Opposed) John Brickly, City of Longview.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.