
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2082

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Postsecondary Education & Workforce (originally sponsored by Representatives Fosse, Low, Fitzgibbon, Berry, Reed, Ramel, Tharinger, Reeves, Paul, and Kloba)

1 AN ACT Relating to assessing the needs of the electrical
2 transmission industry; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1)(a) The department of commerce must
5 conduct a study of the employment and workforce education needs of
6 the electrical transmission industry in the state. The purpose of the
7 study is to: Ascertain labor shortages; identify challenges in
8 recruiting, hiring, and retaining workers in certain enumerated
9 trades; evaluate workforce succession planning in the industry; and
10 assess short-term and long-term training and workforce needs, in
11 order to meet the need to expand electrical transmission capacity
12 infrastructure to meet the state's climate goals.

13 (b) The study must focus on the following groups in the
14 electrical transmission workforce: Line workers; line clearance tree
15 trimmers; and substation technicians.

16 (c) The department of commerce may contract with a third-party
17 entity familiar with conducting similar studies. In conducting the
18 study, the department of commerce or a third-party entity may consult
19 with the employment security department, the department of labor and
20 industries, appropriate centers of excellence, higher education
21 institutions, workforce development centers, utilities, and any other

1 appropriate organizations or entities. To ensure duplication of
2 efforts does not occur, the department of commerce or a third-party
3 entity must coordinate with appropriate agencies and conduct a
4 literature review of existing studies, data, or research related to
5 the electrical transmission industry workforce that is currently
6 ongoing or within the last five years.

7 (d) By December 1, 2024, the department of commerce must submit a
8 preliminary report of the study to the appropriate committees of the
9 legislature pursuant to RCW 43.01.036. At a minimum, the preliminary
10 report must include the methodology that will be used to conduct the
11 study and any demographic data or other information gathered
12 regarding the electrical transmission industry workforce in
13 preparation for the study.

14 (e) By November 1, 2025, the department of commerce must submit a
15 final report of the study to the appropriate committees of the
16 legislature pursuant to RCW 43.01.036. At a minimum, the final report
17 must include the following information:

18 (i) Estimates of electrical transmission industry jobs needed to
19 expand electrical transmission capacity to meet the state's clean
20 energy and climate goals inclusive of the workforce needed to
21 maintain existing infrastructure. These estimates should cover, at
22 minimum, the time periods required for the planning, including the
23 construction, reconstruction, or enlargement, of new or existing
24 electrical transmission facilities under RCW 19.28.010, 80.50.060,
25 80.50.045, and the state environmental policy act;

26 (ii) An inventory of existing apprenticeship programs and
27 anticipated need for expansion of existing apprenticeships or
28 supplemental training programs to meet current and future workforce
29 needs;

30 (iii) The numbers of apprentices in the classifications listed
31 under (b) of this subsection;

32 (iv) Demographic data of the workforce, including age, gender,
33 race, ethnicity, and where possible, other categories of identity;

34 (v) Identification of gaps and barriers to a full electrical
35 transmission workforce pool including, but not limited to, the loss
36 of workers to retirement in the next five, 10, and 15 years, and
37 other current and anticipated retention issues;

38 (vi) A comparison of wages between different jurisdictions in the
39 state and between Washington and other neighboring states, including
40 any incentives offered by other states;

1 (vii) Any data on the number of workers in the classifications
2 listed under (b) of this subsection that completed training in the
3 state and left the state to work in a different state;

4 (viii) Data on the number of out-of-state workers who enter
5 Washington to meet workforce needs on large scale electrical
6 transmission projects in Washington;

7 (ix) Key challenges that could emerge in the foreseeable future
8 based on factors such as growth in demand for electricity and changes
9 in energy production and availability; and

10 (x) Recommendations for the training, recruitment, and retention
11 of the current and anticipated electrical transmission workforce that
12 supplement, enhance, or exceed current training requirements,
13 including recommendations to attract and retain a more diverse
14 workforce, such as members of federally recognized Indian tribes and
15 individuals from overburdened communities as defined in RCW
16 70A.02.010. Identification of barriers to entrance into the
17 electrical transmission workforce must also be included.

18 (2)(a) By November 1, 2024, the department of commerce must
19 convene an electrical transmission industry work group that meets
20 twice yearly. The purpose of the work group is to provide advice,
21 develop strategies, and make recommendations on efforts to support
22 the needs of the electrical transmission industry workforce to meet
23 the state's climate goals.

24 (b) The work group must consist of eight members, as follows:

25 (i) One representative from a labor organization located in
26 Tacoma that represents line workers;

27 (ii) One representative from a labor organization located in
28 Clark county that represents line workers;

29 (iii) One representative from a labor organization located in
30 Spokane county that represents line workers;

31 (iv) One representative from a statewide labor organization with
32 at least 250,000 affiliated members that represents line workers and
33 workers from outside the electrical transmission and construction
34 industry;

35 (v) Two representatives from two different investor-owned
36 utilities; and

37 (vi) Two representatives from two different consumer-owned
38 utilities.

39 (c) The work group shall select a chair and vice chair from among
40 its membership.

1 (d) The work group must:

2 (i) Review the preliminary and final reports submitted by the
3 department of commerce under this section and, if appropriate,
4 recommend to the legislature any legislative changes needed to
5 address issues raised in the reports; and

6 (ii) Periodically review the status of the workforce issues in
7 coordination with the clean energy technology workforce advisory
8 committee established in RCW 28C.18.210, and provide ongoing input
9 and recommendations to the legislature, state and local agencies,
10 labor, and utilities regarding the needs and challenges of the
11 electrical transmission industry.

12 (3) All requirements in this section are subject to the
13 availability of amounts appropriated for the specific purposes
14 described.

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