

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1707
Author: Davies (R)
Amended: 8/21/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE LABOR, PUB. EMP. & RET. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 7/1/26
AYES: Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Cortese, Durazo, Laird

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0, 5/28/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Electricians: certification application, examination, and renewal

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill transfers authority over the certification of electricians from the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) to the Contractors State License Board (CSLB), contingent upon an appropriation by the Legislature beginning July 1, 2028, pursuant to certain timelines and procedures, as specified.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/21/26 allow applicants for certification to provide verifiable work history as identified by the CSLB; require CSLB to determine the adequate level of supervision of apprentices through regulations; delete the \$25 fee cap for initial registration as a trainee and a prohibition on CSLB charging a fee for registration renewal; remove CSLB requirements to certify electricians and register trainees prior to this bill's effective date and ; authorize CSLB to establish initial and renewal registration and certification fees; and make other technical changes.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the DLSE within the Department of Industrial Relations under the

direction of the Labor Commissioner. (Labor Code (LC) §79-107)

- 2) Requires DLSE to maintain minimum standards for the competency and training of electricians through a system of testing and certification. (LC §108)
- 3) Requires DLSE to maintain separate certifications for general electrician, fire/life safety technician, residential electrician, voice data video technician, and nonresidential lighting technician. (LC §108.2(c))
- 4) Requires DLSE to maintain an electrical certification curriculum committee comprised of representatives of the State Department of Education, the California Community Colleges, and the division to, among other things, establish written educational curriculum standards for enrollees in training programs. (LC §108)
- 5) Requires individuals who perform work as electricians to become certified pursuant to 2) above. (LC §108.2(a))
- 6) Provides that certification is required only for those persons who perform work as electricians for contractors licensed as class C-10 electrical contractors under the CSLB. (LC §108.2(b)(1))
- 7) Requires individuals desiring to be certified to submit to the DLSE an application for certification and examination that includes an employment history report from the Social Security Administration. (LC §108.2(b)(4))
- 8) Establishes CSLB to license and regulate contractors and home improvement salespersons. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) § 7000 et seq.)
- 9) Establishes four branches of contracting business in the following classifications: general engineering contracting (A), general building contracting (B1), residential remodeling contracting (B2), specialty contracting (C). (BPC § 7055)
- 10) Defines a C Specialty Contractor as those whose operations involve performance of construction work requiring special skill and whose principal contracting business involves the use of specialized building trades or crafts. (BPC § 7058)
- 11) Establishes an enforcement division within the CSLB to rigorously enforce the

Contractors License Law (license law), enforces the obligation to secure the payment of valid and current workers' compensation insurance and prohibit all forms of unlicensed activity, as specified. (BPC § 7011.4(a))

- 12) Mandates the CSLB to charge a fee of \$20 with the renewal fee for an active C-10 license in addition to any other fees charged to C-10 contractors used by the CSLB to enforce provisions of the LC related to electrician certification. (BPC § 7137(6)(A))

This bill:

- 1) Transfers the entire electrician certification regulatory program from the jurisdiction of the DSLE and moves it under the jurisdiction of the CSLB beginning January 1, 2028, and makes the implementation of this program under the CSLB's jurisdiction contingent upon an appropriation by the Legislature in the annual budget act, as specified. Requires the CSLB to utilize the current regulations under the DSLE for administration and enforcement of the electrician certification program until such time as the CSLB adopts regulations for enforcement and regulation of the electrician certification program. Requires the CSLB to determine through regulations the adequate level of supervision for apprentices.
- 2) Deletes the \$25 fee cap for initial registration for a trainee under the CSLB and removes the prohibition on the CSLB from assessing a renewal fee.
- 3) Authorizes CSLB to establish initial and renewal registration and certification fees necessary to implement the electrician certification program.
- 4) Authorizes an individual who fails the electrician certification examination to reregister for certification and retake the examination no sooner than 21 days upon approval, as specified.
- 5) Limits the current electrician certification program under the jurisdiction of the DLSE to apply only to those applications received on or before July 1, 2028, and has continuing authority to perform any necessary action on applications received, including, but not limited to approving and denying applications and participating in any hearings regarding the denial of those applications.
- 6) Sunsets the electrician certification program under the jurisdiction of the DLSE on January 1, 2029, including the requirements in 3) above.

- 7) States that any electrician certification or trainee registration that is valid on the operative date of the transfer of oversight of the electrician certification program remain valid until its expiration according to its existing term and conditions.

Background

Current Electrician Certification Program Oversight. The DLSE is currently responsible for the registration and enforcement of the electrician certification program in California. LC § 108.2(a) requires individuals who perform work as electricians to become certified. Existing law prohibits uncertified individuals from performing electrical work for which certification is required. Individuals who perform electrical work for C-10 contractors licensed by the CSLB are required to obtain an electrician certification. Individuals who perform work for C-7 low voltage systems contractors or C-45 electric sign contractors do not need to obtain certification. C-10 licensed contractors may only employ individuals who have obtained the electrician certification from the DLSE. If a C-10 contractor is in violation of the certification law, their license is subject to discipline by the CSLB. The DLSE does not take enforcement actions against a licensed contractor, but rather a person who holds or should hold the electrician certification.

The DLSE is currently mandated to issue separate certifications for general, residential, fire/life/safety, non-residential lighting, and voice-data-video technicians. Certification requires 4,800-8,000 hours of experience depending on the type of certification, plus a passing score on the state exam. Currently, to apply for the exam, an applicant must mail an application and a check or money order for \$175 (\$100 exam fee and \$75 administration fee) to DLSE. Additionally, the application must include a Social Security Administration employment history report and documentation of training hours. Once approved, DLSE sends the applicant an eligibility notice, and the applicant can then schedule their exam at a Pearson Vue test center. The number of questions and the length of the exam vary depending on the type of certification.

Electricians must renew their certification every three years by mailing an application and check or money order for \$100 to DLSE. Renewal is contingent upon completion of 32 hours of approved continuing education and proof of at least 2,000 hours of work experience in the industry during that three-year period. The DLSE is also responsible for establishing the minimum competency and training of electricians and must maintain an advisory committee and panels including an electrical certification curriculum committee that determines the

curriculum standards for enrollees in training programs. In addition, the curriculum committee reviews education program providers to ensure they continue to meet the standards established by the curriculum committee. While certification is required for any person working for a C-10 contractor licensee, those who are in approved training programs register with the DSLE and can then perform work which requires electrician certification during the period of enrollment in the training program.

The Role of the CSLB and Electrician Certification Requirements. The CSLB is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the laws and regulations related to the licensure, practice and discipline of the construction industry in California. All businesses and individuals who by themselves or through others construct, alter, or repair, or offer to construct, alter, or repair, any building, highway, road, parking facility, railroad, excavation, or other structure in California must be licensed by the CSLB if the total cost, including both labor and materials of one or more contracts on the project is \$1,000 or more. The CSLB issues four distinct license types, within three branches of contracting services, and separately registers home improvement salespersons. Each licensing classification specifies the type of contracting work permitted within that classification. There are The CSLB oversees approximately 240,000 licensed contractors. The CSLB does not approve or review any construction-related education providers nor have any established curriculum review committees. There are 43 specialty classifications within the (C) specialty licensure category, including the C-10 electrician. As a self-funded program, the CSLB relies solely on licensing, renewal, enforcement and other administrative fees and does not receive general fund support. Licensing fees are specified in statute and updated when necessary to ensure CSLB can perform its regulatory functions.

Specific to the electrician certification program, the CSLB is currently only responsible for ensuring that the C-10 employees meet the electrician certification requirements. BPC § 7137 requires the CSLB to charge a fee, not to exceed \$20, for C-10 for enforcement of the electrician certification requirement. There are approximately 28,000 active C 10 contractors and if they use employees as prescribed in LC § 108.2, the CSLB must ensure that those employees are certified.

As currently drafted, this bill transfers the regulatory program from the DSLE to CSLB's jurisdiction. Pursuant to the provisions of this bill, the CSLB would be the entity responsible for maintaining an electrician certification program, including issuing certificates and renewals, establishing advisory committees and panels as

necessary, including establishing the education and curriculum standards for training programs and approving education providers. The current statutory requirements are lifted from the Labor Code and inserted into the Business and Professions Code. This bill does include a delayed implementation and allows the CSLB and the DSLE to utilize resources from the current electrician certification fund. This bill, as currently drafted, does not require a fee study of the new regulatory program at CSLB.

Comments

The current version of this bill does not provide a clear implementation pathway for the CSLB to begin its oversight of this regulatory program. Until the time the CSLB can adopt regulations, it will be required to abide by the current regulations in effect immediately preceding July 1, 2028, as promulgated under the DSLE, which includes locking the CSLB into a potentially outdated fee structure, a licensing and registration application and renewal process that may be inconsistent with existing practices, and a requirement to approve curriculum training programs, which CSLB currently does not undertake.

A few of the more important programmatic and implementation issues for consideration to ensure the CSLB can effectively administer the electrician certification program are as follows below.

This bill requires CSLB to issue electrician certifications. To become a certificate holder, a registrant must submit an application, qualify for an examination through on-the-job training or education that must be verified, and take and pass an examination. However, fees for the certification, examination, and renewal are not specified in this statute, but rather specified in the current regulations under the DSLE. Although the CSLB will be able to eventually promulgate regulations to implement the program, the regulatory process takes time, and the CSLB will be required to follow a fee structure that might not be sufficient. Without statutory authority to set a fee, CSLB may not be able to adopt regulations for the certification and examination fees.

Additionally, this bill requires each registrant's completed coursework to be updated annually and requires the CSLB to maintain a list of registrants that must be made available upon request and does not set a limit on the number of years any registrant may remain on the list. Due to the renewal workload and estimated volume of registrants, consideration should be included to prescribe a registration renewal fee.

It is currently unknown whether the \$100 fee will be the cost of the examination until CSLB executes a contract with its examination vendor. The CSLB currently contracts with PSI testing centers while the DSLE program utilizes Pearson Vue testing centers. It is unclear how the transfer of testing centers or testing center contracts will be implemented. The fee for the examination should be set to the cost to administer the examination to prevent the applicant from being overcharged or the CSLB from incurring losses. Additionally, to be consistent with other examination fees, fees should be paid directly to the vendor. This bill maintains that the CSLB collect the fee for the examination. It is unclear how the CSLB will then transfer payment to any testing center.

Contractors License Fund Should be Protected. Currently licensing, enforcement and administrative fees are collected in the Contractors License Fund. Regardless of whether the recommendations above are taken, existing licensees of the CSLB should not be responsible for subsidizing the electrician certification program through their current license and renewal fees. Their license fees pay to process their initial license and renewal fees fund administrative and enforcement functions of the CSLB. Taking on this program should not be to the detriment of licensees through reduced services, longer wait times, or higher fees. Importantly, consumers also should not notice a degradation in the quality of services provided by CSLB. Consequently, this bill should ensure that the money in the Contractors License Fund cannot be expended to implement or administer the electrician registration and certification program and that the electrician certification fund remain separate at this time of transition. Merging funds may be appropriate in the future after further assessment of electrician certification program under the jurisdiction of the CSLB.

Curriculum Committee. As currently drafted, this bill requires the CSLB to create and maintain an electrician certification curriculum committee which includes the State Department of Education, the California Community Colleges and the CSLB to establish standards for training programs, review approved curriculum and curriculum providers and remove approval of an approved provider.

The CSLB does not currently review or approve curriculum. California already has an entity with specific expertise in apprenticeship and workforce training. The Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) within the Department of Industrial Relations administers California's apprenticeship laws and has existing responsibility for the approval and oversight of apprenticeship programs and standards, including programs in the building and construction trades. Moreover, existing electrician-certification regulations expressly involve DAS in curriculum oversight. The current Electrician Certification Curriculum Committee is

established within the California Apprenticeship Council's regulatory framework, includes the Chief of DAS, or the Chief's designee, as a member, and requires the Chief of DAS or designee to serve as secretary to the committee.

Given DAS' existing expertise in apprenticeship and training standards, as well as its existing role on the Electrician Certification Curriculum Committee, responsibility for establishing and approving electrician training curricula would be more appropriately assigned to DAS, or another entity with expertise in vocational education and workforce training, rather than requiring CSLB to assume responsibility for an area outside its traditional contractor licensing and enforcement functions.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, this bill would result in one-time and ongoing costs, likely exceeding \$3 million annually, to CSLB to assume responsibility for the Electrician Certification Program, including staffing, examination administration, legal support, and information technology activities. Specifically, estimated costs include \$1.2 million annually for staffing, \$1.2 million annually for contracted examination and operational support, \$300,000 annually for legal services, and one-time information technology transition costs of approximately \$900,000, followed by ongoing IT support costs of approximately \$450,000 annually (Electrician Certification Fund and Contractors License Fund). Costs to the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) would be minor and absorbable.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/21/26)

California State Association of Electrical Workers

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/21/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: The California State Association of Electrical Workers writes in support and notes, "AB 1707 improves the administration of California's electrician certification program by transferring oversight from the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) to the Contractors State License Board (CSLB), placing certification for electricians under the same agency that already licenses and regulates electrical contractors. This alignment improves efficiency and coordination while maintaining the existing certification standards and qualifications that ensure electrical work is performed by trained and qualified professionals."

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0, 5/28/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Jackson, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Yeaphana LaMarr & Elissa Silva / B., P. & E.D. /916-651-4104
8/24/26 12:16:18

**** END ****