

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 994 (Senator McCray, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Department of Labor – Electricians – State Licensing Workgroup

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) to convene a workgroup to study specified issues regarding the licensing of electricians and the provision of electrical services and low-voltage electrical services in the State. By December 1, 2020, MDL must report the workgroup’s findings and recommendations to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDL can handle the bill’s requirements with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The workgroup must study and make recommendations on the following issues:

- the licensing of master, journeyman, and apprentice electricians by the State Board of Master Electricians, including uniform education, experience, and examination requirements;
- the licensing, regulation, and qualifications for individuals who provide low-voltage electrical services in the State, including exempting individuals who work with residential integrators on low-voltage technology systems, if necessary;

- the role of local governments in the licensing and code enforcement of and pulling of permits by electricians and individuals who provide low-voltage electrical services;
- the adoption of the National Electric Code across all jurisdictions in the State;
- an examination of the costs and benefits of adopting the licensing scheme proposed in Senate Bill 994 and House Bill 1127 of 2020; and
- any other relevant issues as determined by MDL.

MDL must also (1) provide notice of each meeting of the workgroup to each person who provided written or oral testimony to a committee of the General Assembly for a hearing on either Senate Bill 994 or House Bill 1127 during the 2020 legislative session and (2) consider comments from interested stakeholders in developing any recommendations.

Current Law: The State Board of Master Electricians in MDL issues master electrician licenses to qualified individuals under the Maryland Master Electricians Act. Each county is required to adopt licensing qualifications comparable to or more stringent than specified State qualifications or require a State license and enforce compliance with State licensing requirements. In a local jurisdiction that requires a local license, the State license does not authorize the provision of electrical services but serves only as a reciprocal mechanism for obtaining licenses in each local jurisdiction. In the two jurisdictions that do not have local licensing requirements, an electrician must have a State license to provide electrical services as a master electrician.

To obtain a State license as a master electrician, the applicant must have seven years of experience providing electrical services for all types of electrical equipment and apparatus, under the supervision of a master electrician or a similarly qualified employee of a governmental unit. The State board does not issue journeyman, low-voltage, or apprentice electrician licenses. The board is authorized to establish fees by regulation. The initial licensing fee is \$20 and the renewal fee is \$25.

Background: The State board shares licensing authority with local jurisdictions, all but two of which, Allegany and Garrett counties, have a licensing program for master electricians. Five counties – Calvert, Charles, Harford, Montgomery, and Prince George’s – also license journeyman electricians. The local jurisdictions that license low-voltage electricians and/or apprentices are unknown. The State board licenses approximately 5,400 master electricians; it is estimated that about 2,000 master electricians have only a local license because they work in just one jurisdiction and, therefore, have no need for a State license.

Statute requires local jurisdictions to enforce licensing requirements. The local policing of the electrical profession primarily occurs through locally issued permits and locally

conducted inspections. Every jurisdiction in Maryland has a building permit office that is generally separate from the local licensing board.

Statewide Regulation of Electricians

The 2010 [sunset review](#) of the State board conducted by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) examined the issue of a statewide electrician license. The evaluation concluded that, to ensure that electricians are operating in a safe manner throughout the State, a uniform licensing system should be adopted across the State and recommended that this be accomplished by establishing a new State Board of Electricians modeled after other statewide regulatory licensing boards. In its evaluation, DLS recommended that the current State board be allowed to terminate and that it be replaced by a new State Board of Electricians with statewide regulatory authority, in addition to other recommendations.

Chapter 579 of 2013 established the Task Force to Study Licensing and Continuing Education Requirements for Electricians. The task force had to, among other duties, (1) examine proposed changes to the State licensing requirements for electricians in the State and (2) review appropriate approaches for the licensure of electricians at the State and local level. The [final report](#) made a number of recommendations, including the adoption of a statewide master electrician license.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 1127 (Delegates Hornberger and Mosby) - Economic Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Labor; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; Garrett County; Department of Legislative Services

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