
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6378

AN ACT CODIFYING PREVAILING WAGE CONTRACT RATES.

SUMMARY

This bill revises the method the labor commissioner must use to set prevailing wage rates on public works projects. The prevailing wage law requires contractors on public works projects to at least pay the prevailing hourly wage rate (including benefits), as determined by law, to all eligible workers on the project. The requirement applies to new construction projects of \$1 million or more and renovation projects of \$100,000 or more.

Current law allows the commissioner to set the rates in one of two ways: (1) on his own, after (a) holding a hearing to determine the prevailing wage rates on any public work within a specified area and (b) establishing classifications of skilled, semiskilled, and ordinary labor, or (2) by adopting and using the applicable prevailing wage rate determinations made by the federal labor secretary for the federal prevailing wage law. In practice, the labor commissioner uses the federally-determined rates for the four types of prevailing wage projects: building, heavy, highway, and residential.

The bill instead requires the commissioner to make the prevailing wage rate (including benefits) for each trade or occupation the same as the rate established in the dominant collective bargaining agreement in effect for that trade or occupation for the town where the project is being constructed. (The bill does not say how the labor commissioner determines which agreement is “dominant.”) If there is no collective bargaining agreement for a trade or occupation in the town, the commissioner must use the federally-determined rate. The bill also makes a conforming change in a related law by eliminating the requirement for the labor commissioner to hold a hearing to determine the prevailing wage rates for state highway projects.

The bill applies the new method for determining the rates for building, heavy, and highway projects. It is not clear how the rate determinations will be made for residential projects, which are those of either single- or multi-family housing or dormitories of no more than four stories.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 10 Nay 3 (02/18/2021)