Bill No.: SB-988
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE WORKFORCE AND THE SAFE DELIVERY OF NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION.
Vote Date: 3/14/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/7/2019

Disclaimer: The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.

SPONSORS OF BILL:
Labor and Public Employees Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:
The bill requires each construction contractor that a public utility company hires to install or replace natural gas distribution to employ on site only employed who have completed all of the training and certification, they must notify the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority’s Gas Pipeline Safety Unit when hiring or using a contractor that is not a state resident. The notice must include the proper training and certificate required for the job.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Nate Brown, International Union of Operating Engineers: Over 60% of the nation’s leak-prone natural gas distribution infrastructure is located under the streets and sidewalks of the northeast. Over 1,000 miles exist in CT (enough to span Hartford to Chicago!) Replacing this old infrastructure is a federal and state compliance obligation, but because the demand for qualified skilled contractors is so high CT must compete with other states to attract qualified/trained workers. CT is approving the expansion of natural gas utilization, but the in-State workforce is shrinking and highly susceptible to migration into adjacent states. Creating a greater transparency by using of out-of-state contractors and requiring contractors to ensure compliance with training and certification requirements for CT is necessary.
Al Carbone, Manager, Southern CT Gas/CT Natural Gas: Although they support safe installation and replacement of natural gas infrastructure and believe operators should be fully qualified to perform the work, under Federal code the minimum training and certification requirements are already identified. Code 40 CFR Part 192 Subpart N requires each natural gas pipeline operator to have a formal operator qualification program requiring the necessary training for work on gas pipelines. Because of the high volatility, precautions are necessary to ensure each workforce member has proper qualifications. This bill will help do this.

Cameron Champlin, Local 777 Representative: This union has a training facility offering no-cost instruction and hands-on training on the qualifications needed to properly install all types of piping for natural gas and propane.

Kim Glassman, Director, Foundation for Fair Contracting of CT: Ct has made significant investments to wean off oil and expand access to natural gas. With the continued expansion of this energy source comes unique safety challenges that require a very skilled workforce. CT must be adept and certified in over 60 specific work activities. It could take months or years for workers to earn all the necessary certifications and become proficient in this type of work. It is in the best interest of everyone to continually invest in workforce training.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Marie Knudsen Date: March 22, 2019