

EXHIBIT 2
DATE 1/27/09
NR 236



January 27, 2009

TO: House Judiciary Committee Members

FR: Ellen Leahy, Co-Chair AMPHO Legislative Committee

RE: HB 236-- Require landlord to test private water source for fecal and E coli

Dear Chairman Stoker & Committee Members:

The Association of Montana Public Health Officials (AMPHO) would like to express our support for HB 236 and thank Representative Kottel for bringing it forward. AMPHO represents 36 Montana local health departments of all sizes from very rural to the seven biggest in the state. The type of water safety concerns that this legislation seeks to address span the state. H.B. 236 would help renters know if the water they receive from a private source has been shown to be free from fecal and *E. coli* bacterial contamination. This basic, inexpensive safeguard should be available to all residents whether they own or rent. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.



January 26, 2009

Representative Ron Stoker, Chair
Judiciary Committee

I am pleased to write in support House Bill 236 on behalf of Missoula City-County Health Department. As a city-county health department, we receive complaint calls from renters who experience a variety of problems. Within the past 6 months we received two calls from renters who were having problems with contaminated water. We were unable to find any health rules or regulations that gave us authority to require the landlord to provide potable water to rental units.

Safe drinking water is a fundamental public health concern. Some contaminants will not cause color, flavor or odor to be present. One must test water to determine if it is contaminated. Since the presence of total coliform bacteria is an indicator of contamination, we support an annual test for **total coliform bacteria** once in the spring of the year. Spring is the time of highest groundwater known to contribute to contamination of water sources. With more than a dozen certified labs to analyze drinking water samples, there are many lab options for well owners across the state. The cost of a microbiological test for drinking water is usually less than \$25.

There are many ways a water source can become contaminated. A hose attached to a hose bib left in a wading pool or stock water tank can cause contamination. An improperly plumbed underground sprinkler system can cause contamination of drinking water. A septic system located too close to a well can cause contamination. Local sanitarians are often consulted to help trouble shoot problems with private water sources. We are better able to assist with troubleshooting when we know what type of contaminant is fouling the well. Annual testing for total coliform bacteria is a good tool and a minimal requirement to assure safe drinking water for people residing in rental units.

I'd like to thank the Judiciary Committee and Representative Kottel for bringing this important legislation forward and I'd strongly encourage your support.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Lou Gilman". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Mary Lou Gilman, R.S.
Environmental Health Specialist



January 21, 2009

Representative Ron Stoker, Chair
Judiciary Committee

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