

SB 191: MONTANA SEPTIC DISCLOSURE ACT

Protecting water quality and private property.

What is it?

- >> This bill is similar to the radon or mold disclosure acts passed by previous Montana Legislatures.
- >> It protects property buyers purchasing land with a septic system (individual on-site sewage treatment) by ensuring the buyer receives all existing permits, maintenance records, and other information related to the septic system before purchasing the property.
- >> It protects property sellers by relieving them of liability for future problems with the septic system, provided they give the buyer all relevant information.

Why do we need it?

- >> In the past two decades, 3 out of 4 new lots were created with individual septic systems. Over 80,000 lots have been created with septic systems since 1990.
- >> One-third of all Montanans use decentralized wastewater treatment, the majority of which are septic systems. Many of these sewage collection systems are aging, in disrepair, or in need of maintenance.
- >> Poorly maintained septic systems can leak harmful bacteria and other pollution into groundwater, which can negatively impact neighboring water wells, streams, or property value.
- >> Septic systems and individual wastewater treatment systems need routine maintenance (like pumping) to protect property from costly septic backups or flooding, and to protect public health and safety from water quality pollution.
- >> Currently, sellers are not required to provide any information related to the septic system on a given property, and many buyers are unaware if the systems they purchase are permitted or properly maintained.

Questions?

- >> Brianna Randall at 406.370.5289 or brianna@clarkfork.org