



Tuesday, February 01, 2011

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 2/2/11  
HB 352

RE: HB 352 in House Natural Resources Committee

Chairman Hendrick and members of the committee,

My name is Jim Carlson. I am Director of the Sanitarians in Missoula County and am speaking on behalf of the Missoula City-County Health Department, the City of Missoula, and Missoula County. I have been a Licensed Sanitarian in Montana since 1976.

This bill requires DEQ to issue a variance, if requested, to a public water supply that has contaminated water if the supply uses bottled water to achieve compliance with a maximum contaminant level and posts the tap that the water is not potable.

Let us suppose that the Maximum Contaminant Level for which the variance is granted is fecal coliform present in the water. That means that there are bacteria from mammalian feces in the water. Let us also suppose that the public water supply in question is a bar and that the owner has bottled water available and that he posts signs in the lavatory and that he has received an variance under this bill.

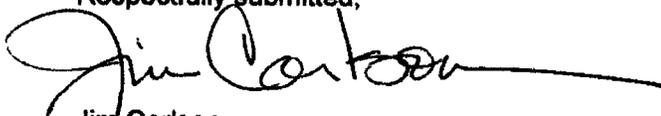
A customer may go the bathroom, read the sign and not drink the water but wash their hands in water that is highly contaminated with fecal material. Further, it is unclear that under this bill that the bar owner could not run that same water in the ice machine or use it to wash dishes. Would anyone want that ice in their coke?

The United States has been the leader in food and water sanitation for more than 100 years and our life expectancy has increased as a result. All bars and restaurants with their own well are regulated as "a public water supply". Sure, sometimes it costs money for a rural bar or restaurant with a problem well to treat the water in an acceptable manor but that is the cost of delivering safe products to drink and eat to our citizens.

This bill represents a request to ignore established public health protections, it represents a turn to practices more common in third world countries where water sanitation is not assumed but most importantly it would establish a high and unacceptable level of risk to the health and safety of Montanans.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote to reject HB 352.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jim Carlson  
Director of Environmental Health