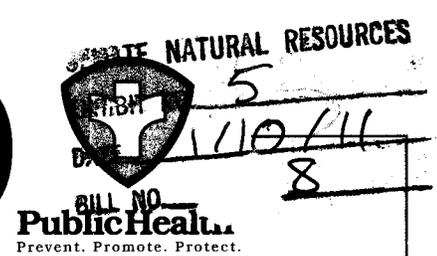


# AMPHO

Association of Montana Public Health Officials



Monday, January 10 2011

Senate Natural Resources Committee  
RE: SB 8

Madam Chair Barrett and members of the committee,

My name is Ellen Leahy. I am the Health Officer at the Missoula City-County Health Department. I am speaking on behalf of the Association of Montana Public Health Officials, which represents local public health departments of varying sizes all across the state.

This bill clarifies the authority of local government, including both Cities and Counties, to require public water and or public sewer in the subdivision rules of local government.

Public water and sewer are essential to protecting public health and safety in higher density areas. The aquifers around many of Montana's urban populations are contaminated with elevated nitrates from septic systems, other chemicals, detectable levels of prescription drugs and drug metabolites. Urban populations around the world have found it necessary to provide for public water and sewer systems to insure safe and sustainable drinking water.

When urban and suburban populations rely on individual wells and individual septic systems, aquifers often become contaminated over time and there is no ability to supply homeowners a highly safe water supply without tearing up all of the streets and installing public water and/or sewer.

Infrastructure such as water and sewer typically costs three to four times more to install after a subdivision is developed rather than before because lawns, streets, driveways and fences don't have to be dug up then replaced.

This bill simply clarifies one of the most important planning tools that local government must have to insure the sustained health and safety of its citizens.

Please support Senate Bill 8.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Leahy, R.N., M.N.  
AMPHO Legislative Co-Chair  
Health Officer, Missoula City-County Public Health Department