

SENATE BILL NO. 425
INTRODUCED BY R. LAIBLE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING DEADLINES FOR REVIEWING PRELIMINARY PLATS AND SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PLAT OR SUBDIVISION APPLICATION IS COMPLETE; REQUIRING THE REVIEWING AGENCY TO NOTIFY THE SUBDIVIDER OR DEVELOPER OF DEFICIENCIES IN THE PRELIMINARY PLAT OR SUBDIVISION APPLICATION; REVISING THE DEADLINE FOR APPROVAL, CONDITIONAL APPROVAL, OR DISAPPROVAL OF A PRELIMINARY PLAT OR SUBDIVISION APPLICATION; REQUIRING THE GOVERNING BODY TO PROVIDE A WRITTEN STATEMENT THAT INCLUDES THE GOVERNING BODY'S SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR A CONDITION IMPOSITION OR DISAPPROVAL OF A PRELIMINARY PLAT OR SUBDIVISION APPLICATION; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 76-3-604, 76-3-620, 76-4-104, AND 76-4-125, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 76-3-604, MCA, is amended to read:

"76-3-604. Review of preliminary plat. (1) The governing body or its designated agent or agency shall review the preliminary plat to determine whether it conforms to the provisions of this chapter and to rules prescribed or adopted pursuant to this chapter.

(2) (a) Within 5 working days of receipt of a preliminary plat, the reviewing agency shall notify the subdivider whether or not the reviewing agency believes that the preliminary plat is complete. If the reviewing agency determines that the preliminary plat is not complete, the reviewing agency shall include in the notification a detailed identification of all deficiencies.

(b) Within 5 working days of receipt of a preliminary plat that has been resubmitted after identification of all deficiencies as provided in subsection (2)(a), the reviewing agency shall notify the subdivider whether or not the reviewing agency believes that the preliminary plat is complete. Except when information has been deleted from the resubmitted preliminary plat, the reviewing agency may not identify any deficiencies that were not included in the notification required under subsection (2)(a).

~~(2)(3)~~ (3) The governing body shall approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the preliminary plat within 60 working days of its presentation submittal of a complete preliminary plat, as provided in subsection (2), unless the subdivider consents to an extension of the review period.

~~(3)~~(4) If the governing body disapproves or conditionally approves the preliminary plat, it shall forward one copy of the plat to the subdivider accompanied by a letter over the appropriate signature stating, in accordance with the requirements of 76-3-620, the specific reason for disapproval or enumerating the conditions that must be met to ensure approval of the final plat."

Section 2. Section 76-3-620, MCA, is amended to read:

"76-3-620. Review requirements -- written statement. In addition to the requirements of 76-3-604 and 76-3-609, a governing body may not ~~deny or condition a subdivision approval~~ conditionally approve or disapprove a preliminary plat or subdivision under this part unless it provides a written statement to the applicant detailing the circumstances of the ~~subdivision denial or condition imposition~~ or disapproval. The statement must include:

- (1) the reason for the ~~denial or condition imposition~~ or disapproval;
- (2) the evidence that justifies the ~~denial or condition imposition~~ or disapproval; and
- (3) information regarding the appeal process for the ~~denial or condition imposition~~ or disapproval; and
- (4) the governing body's specific statutory authority for the condition imposition or disapproval."

Section 3. Section 76-4-104, MCA, is amended to read:

"76-4-104. Rules for administration and enforcement. (1) The department shall, subject to the provisions of 76-4-135, adopt reasonable rules, including adoption of sanitary standards, necessary for administration and enforcement of this part.

(2) The rules and standards must provide the basis for approving subdivisions for various types of public and private water supplies, sewage disposal facilities, storm water drainage ways, and solid waste disposal. The rules and standards must be related to:

- (a) size of lots;
- (b) contour of land;
- (c) porosity of soil;
- (d) ground water level;
- (e) distance from lakes, streams, and wells;
- (f) type and construction of private water and sewage facilities; and
- (g) other factors affecting public health and the quality of water for uses relating to agriculture, industry, recreation, and wildlife.

(3) (a) Except as provided in subsection (3)(b), the rules must provide for the review of subdivisions by

a local department or board of health, as described in Title 50, chapter 2, part 1, if the local department or board of health employs a registered sanitarian or a registered professional engineer and if the department certifies under subsection (4) that the local department or board is competent to conduct the review.

(b) (i) Except as provided in 75-6-121 and subsection (3)(b)(ii) of this section, a local department or board of health may not review public water supply systems, public sewage systems, or extensions of or connections to these systems.

(ii) A local department or board of health may be certified to review subdivisions proposed to connect to existing municipal water and wastewater systems previously approved by the department if no extension of the systems is required.

(4) The department shall also adopt standards and procedures for certification and maintaining certification to ensure that a local department or board of health is competent to review the subdivisions as described in subsection (3).

(5) The department shall review those subdivisions described in subsection (3) if:

(a) a proposed subdivision lies within more than one jurisdictional area and the respective governing bodies are in disagreement concerning approval of or conditions to be imposed on the proposed subdivision; or

(b) the local department or board of health elects not to be certified.

(6) The rules must further provide for:

(a) providing the reviewing authority with a copy of the plat or certificate of survey subject to review under this part and other documentation showing the layout or plan of development, including:

(i) total development area; and

(ii) total number of proposed dwelling units and structures requiring facilities for water supply or sewage disposal;

(b) adequate evidence that a water supply that is sufficient in terms of quality, quantity, and dependability will be available to ensure an adequate supply of water for the type of subdivision proposed;

(c) evidence concerning the potability of the proposed water supply for the subdivision;

(d) adequate evidence that a sewage disposal facility is sufficient in terms of capacity and dependability;

(e) standards and technical procedures applicable to storm drainage plans and related designs, in order to ensure proper drainage ways;

(f) standards and technical procedures applicable to sanitary sewer plans and designs, including soil testing and site design standards for on-lot sewage disposal systems when applicable;

(g) standards and technical procedures applicable to water systems;

(h) standards and technical procedures applicable to solid waste disposal;

(i) criteria for granting waivers and deviations from the standards and technical procedures adopted under subsections (6)(e) through (6)(h);

(j) evidence to establish that, if a public water supply system or a public sewage system is proposed, provision has been made for the system and, if other methods of water supply or sewage disposal are proposed, evidence that the systems will comply with state and local laws and regulations that are in effect at the time of submission of the preliminary or final plan or plat; and

(k) evidence to demonstrate that appropriate easements, covenants, agreements, and management entities have been established to ensure the protection of human health and state waters and to ensure the long-term operation and maintenance of water supply, storm water drainage, and sewage disposal facilities.

(7) If the reviewing authority is a local department or board of health, it shall notify the department of its recommendation for approval or disapproval of the subdivision not later than 50 days from its receipt of ~~the a~~ a complete subdivision application, as provided in 76-4-125. The department shall make a final decision on the subdivision within 10 days after receiving the recommendation of the local reviewing authority, but not later than 60 days after the submission of a complete application, as provided in 76-4-125.

(8) Review and certification or denial of certification that a division of land is not subject to sanitary restrictions under this part may occur only under those rules in effect when a complete application is submitted to the reviewing authority, except that in cases in which current rules would preclude the use for which the lot was originally intended, the applicable requirements in effect at the time the lot was recorded must be applied. In the absence of specific requirements, minimum standards necessary to protect public health and water quality apply.

(9) The reviewing authority may not deny or condition a certificate of subdivision approval under this part unless it provides a written statement to the applicant detailing the circumstances of the denial or condition imposition. The statement must include:

(a) the reason for the denial or condition imposition;

(b) the evidence that justifies the denial or condition imposition; and

(c) information regarding the appeal process for the denial or condition imposition."

Section 4. Section 76-4-125, MCA, is amended to read:

"76-4-125. Review of subdivision application -- land divisions excluded from review. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), an application for review of a subdivision must be submitted to the reviewing authority. The review by the reviewing authority must be as follows:

(a) At any time after the developer has submitted an application under the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, the developer shall present a subdivision application to the reviewing authority. The application must include preliminary plans and specifications for the proposed development, whatever information the developer feels necessary for its subsequent review, and information required by the reviewing authority. Subdivision fees assessed by the reviewing authority must accompany the application. If the proposed development includes onsite sewage disposal facilities, the developer shall notify the designated agent of the local board of health prior to presenting the subdivision application to the reviewing authority. The agent may conduct a preliminary site assessment to determine whether the site meets applicable state and local requirements.

(b) (i) Within 5 working days of receipt of a subdivision application, the reviewing authority shall notify the developer whether or not the reviewing authority believes that the application is complete. If the reviewing authority determines that the application is not complete, the reviewing authority shall include in the notification a detailed identification of all deficiencies.

(ii) Within 5 working days of receipt of a subdivision application that has been resubmitted after identification of all deficiencies as provided in subsection (1)(b)(i), the reviewing authority shall notify the subdivider whether or not the reviewing authority believes that the subdivision application is complete. Except when information has been deleted from the resubmitted subdivision application, the reviewing authority may not identify any deficiencies that were not included in the notification required under subsection (1)(b)(i).

(b)(c) Except as provided in 75-1-208(4)(b), the department shall make a final decision on the proposed subdivision within 60 days after the submission of a complete application and payment of fees to the reviewing authority unless an environmental impact statement is required, at which time this deadline may be increased to 120 days. The reviewing authority may not request additional information for the purpose of extending the time allowed for a review and final decision on the proposed subdivision after the reviewing authority determines that the subdivision application is complete.

(d) If the department approves the subdivision, the department shall issue a certificate of subdivision approval indicating that it has approved the plans and specifications and that the subdivision is not subject to a sanitary restriction.

(e) If the department conditionally approves or disapproves the subdivision, the department shall provide a written statement to the applicant detailing the specific statutory authority for the condition imposition or disapproval.

(2) A subdivision excluded from the provisions of chapter 3 must be submitted for review according to the provisions of this part, except that the following divisions or parcels, unless the exclusions are used to evade

the provisions of this part, are not subject to review:

- (a) the exclusions cited in 76-3-201 and 76-3-204;
 - (b) divisions made for the purpose of acquiring additional land to become part of an approved parcel, provided that water or sewage disposal facilities may not be constructed on the additional acquired parcel and that the division does not fall within a previously platted or approved subdivision;
 - (c) divisions made for purposes other than the construction of water supply or sewage and solid waste disposal facilities as the department specifies by rule;
 - (d) divisions located within jurisdictional areas that have adopted growth policies pursuant to chapter 1 or within first-class or second-class municipalities for which the governing body certifies, pursuant to 76-4-127, that adequate storm water drainage and adequate municipal facilities will be provided; and
 - (e) subject to the provisions of subsection (3), a remainder of an original tract created by segregating a parcel from the tract for purposes of transfer if:
 - (i) the remainder is served by a public or multiple-user sewage system approved before January 1, 1997, pursuant to local regulations or this chapter; or
 - (ii) the remainder is 1 acre or larger and has an individual sewage system that was constructed prior to April 29, 1993, and, if required when installed, was approved pursuant to local regulations or this chapter.
- (3) Consistent with the applicable provisions of 50-2-116(1)(i), a local health officer may require that, prior to the filing of a plat or a certificate of survey subject to review under this part for the parcel to be segregated from the remainder referenced in subsection (2)(e)(ii), the remainder include acreage or features sufficient to accommodate a replacement drainfield."

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