

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 364  
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6  
 7 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING THE SANITATION IN SUBDIVISIONS ACT  
 8 APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS; ALLOWING AN INDEPENDENT REVIEWER TO CONDUCT  
 9 SUBDIVISION REVIEWS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; ~~DETERMINING TRIGGERS FOR~~  
 10 ~~INDEPENDENT REVIEWS~~; REQUIRING REPORTING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL;  
 11 REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY TO DEVELOP A CURRICULUM AND  
 12 EXAMINATION TO CERTIFY APPLICANTS; ALLOWING A CERTIFIED APPLICANT TO REVIEW  
 13 SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS AND ASSUME LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REVIEW; REMOVING  
 14 LIMITS ON EXTENSIONS OR ALTERATIONS OF EXISTING PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS FOR  
 15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW; REMOVING THE REQUIREMENT FOR LOCAL REVIEW AGENTS TO  
 16 REVIEW FOR ADEQUATE STORMWATER DRAINAGE; REQUIRING REFUNDS OF SUBDIVISION FEES  
 17 FOR DEADLINE EXTENSIONS REQUESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY;  
 18 REVISING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; PROVIDING  
 19 DEFINITIONS; AMENDING SECTIONS 75-6-121, 76-4-102, 76-4-104, 76-4-105, 76-4-114, 76-4-115, ~~AND~~ 76-  
 20 4-116, 76-1-121, AND 76-4-127 MCA; AND PROVIDING AN APPLICABILITY DATE ~~AND A TERMINATION~~  
 21 ~~DATE.~~"

22  
 23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

24  
 25 **Section 1.** Section 75-6-121, MCA, is amended to read:  
 26 **"75-6-121. Delegation of review of small public water and sewer construction.** (1) If a local  
 27 government requests a delegation and the appropriate division of the local government has established  
 28 satisfactory review programs, the department may shall delegate to the division of local government the review



1 of:

2 (a) small public water and sewer systems; and

3 (b) extensions or alterations of existing public water and sewer systems ~~that involve 50 or fewer~~

4 ~~connections.~~

5 (2) The department ~~may~~shall adopt rules regarding the delegation of review authority to divisions

6 of local government.

7 (3) A division of local government conducting a review under this section must receive 90% of the

8 review fee, and the department must receive the remaining 10% of the review fee."

10 **Section 2.** Section 76-4-102, MCA, is amended to read:

11 **"76-4-102. Definitions.** As used in this part, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the

12 following definitions apply:

13 (1) "Adequate county water and/or sewer district facilities" means facilities provided by a county

14 water and/or sewer district incorporated under Title 7, chapter 13, that operate in compliance with Title 75,

15 chapters 5 and 6.

16 (2) "Adequate municipal facilities" means municipally, publicly, or privately owned facilities that

17 supply water, treat sewage, or dispose of solid waste for all or most properties within the boundaries of a

18 municipality and that are operating in compliance with Title 75, chapters 5 and 6.

19 (3) "Board" means the board of environmental review.

20 (4) "Certifying authority" means a municipality or a county water and/or sewer district that meets

21 the eligibility requirements established by the department under 76-4-104(6).

22 (5) "Department" means the department of environmental quality.

23 (6) "Extension of a public sewage system" means a sewerline that connects two or more sewer

24 service lines to a sewer main.

25 (7) "Extension of a public water supply system" means a waterline that connects two or more water

26 service lines to a water main.

27 (8) "Facilities" means public or private facilities for the supply of water or disposal of sewage or

28 solid waste and any pipes, conduits, or other stationary method by which water, sewage, or solid wastes might

1 be transported or distributed.

2 (9) "Independent reviewer" means a registered sanitarian or registered professional engineer that  
3 the department has certified to conduct a review under 76-4-104.

4 (9)(10) "Individual water system" means any water system that serves one living unit or commercial  
5 unit and that is not a public water supply system as defined in 75-6-102.

6 (10)(11) "Mixing zone" has the meaning provided in 75-5-103.

7 (11)(12) (a) "Proposed drainfield mixing zone" means a mixing zone submitted for approval under this  
8 chapter after March 30, 2011.

9 (b) The term does not include drainfield mixing zones that existed or were approved under this  
10 chapter prior to March 30, 2011.

11 (12)(13) (a) "Proposed well isolation zone" means a well isolation zone submitted for approval under  
12 this chapter after October 1, 2013.

13 (b) The term does not include well isolation zones that existed or were approved under this  
14 chapter prior to October 1, 2013.

15 (13)(14) "Public sewage system" or "public sewage disposal system" means a public sewage system  
16 as defined in 75-6-102.

17 (14)(15) "Public water supply system" has the meaning provided in 75-6-102.

18 (15)(16) "Regional authority" means any regional water authority, regional wastewater authority, or  
19 regional water and wastewater authority organized pursuant to the provisions of Title 75, chapter 6, part 3.

20 (16)(17) "Registered professional engineer" means a person licensed to practice as a professional  
21 engineer under Title 37, chapter 67.

22 (17)(18) "Registered sanitarian" means a person licensed to practice as a sanitarian under Title 37,  
23 chapter 40.

24 (18)(19) "Reviewing authority" means the department or a local department or board of health certified  
25 to conduct a review under 76-4-104.

26 (19)(20) "Sanitary restriction" means a prohibition against the erection of any dwelling, shelter, or  
27 building requiring facilities for the supply of water or the disposition of sewage or solid waste or the construction  
28 of water supply or sewage or solid waste disposal, facilities until the department has approved plans for those

1 facilities.

2 ~~(20)~~(21) "Sewage" has the meaning provided in 75-5-103.

3 ~~(24)~~(22) "Sewer service line" means a sewerline that connects a single building or living unit to a public  
4 sewage system or to an extension of a public sewage system.

5 ~~(22)~~(23) "Solid waste" has the meaning provided in 75-10-103.

6 ~~(23)~~(24) "Subdivision" means a division of land or land so divided that creates one or more parcels  
7 containing less than 20 acres, exclusive of public roadways, in order that the title to or possession of the  
8 parcels may be sold, rented, leased, or otherwise conveyed and includes any resubdivision, any condominium,  
9 townhome, or townhouse, or any parcel, regardless of size, that provides two or more permanent spaces for  
10 recreational camping vehicles or mobile homes.

11 ~~(24)~~(25) "Water service line" means a waterline that connects a single building or living unit to a public  
12 water supply system or to an extension of a public water supply system.

13 ~~(25)~~(26) "Well isolation zone" means the area within a 100-foot radius of a water well."  
14

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

16 **"76-4-104. Rules for administration and enforcement.** (1) The department shall, subject to the  
17 provisions of 76-4-135, adopt reasonable rules, including adoption of sanitary standards, necessary for  
18 administration and enforcement of this part.

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

22 (a) size of lots;

23 (b) contour of land;

24 (c) porosity of soil;

25 (d) ground water level;

26 (e) distance from lakes, streams, and wells;

27 (f) type and construction of private water and sewage facilities; and

28 (g) other factors affecting public health and the quality of water for uses relating to agriculture,

1 industry, recreation, and wildlife.

2 (3) (a) Except as provided in subsection (3)(b), the rules must provide for the review of  
3 subdivisions consistent with 76-4-114 by a local department or board of health, as described in Title 50, chapter  
4 2, part 1, if the local department or board of health employs a registered sanitarian or a registered professional  
5 engineer and if the department certifies under subsection (4) that the local department or board is competent to  
6 conduct the review.

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (6) The rules must further provide for:

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

24 (i) total development area; and

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

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

- 1 (c) evidence concerning the potability of the proposed water supply for the subdivision;
- 2 (d) adequate evidence that a sewage disposal facility is sufficient in terms of capacity and  
3 dependability;
- 4 (e) standards and technical procedures applicable to storm drainage plans and related designs, in  
5 order to ensure proper drainage ways, except that the rules must provide a basis for not requiring storm water  
6 review under this part for parcels 5 acres and larger on which the total impervious area does not and will not  
7 exceed 5%. Nothing in this section relieves any person of the duty to comply with the requirements of Title 75,  
8 chapter 5, or rules adopted pursuant to Title 75, chapter 5.
- 9 (f) standards and technical procedures applicable to sanitary sewer plans and designs, including  
10 soil testing and site design standards for on-lot sewage disposal systems when applicable;
- 11 (g) standards and technical procedures applicable to water systems;
- 12 (h) standards and technical procedures applicable to solid waste disposal;
- 13 (i) adequate evidence that a proposed drainfield mixing zone and a proposed well isolation zone  
14 are located wholly within the boundaries of the proposed subdivision where the proposed drainfield or well is  
15 located or that an easement or, for public land, other authorization has been obtained from the landowner to  
16 place the proposed drainfield mixing zone or proposed well isolation zone outside the boundaries of the  
17 proposed subdivision where the proposed drainfield or proposed well is located.
- 18 (i) A proposed drainfield mixing zone or a proposed well isolation zone for an individual water  
19 system well that is a minimum of 50 feet inside the subdivision boundary may extend outside the boundaries of  
20 the subdivision onto adjoining land that is dedicated for use as a right-of-way for roads, railroads, or utilities.
- 21 (ii) This subsection (6)(i) does not apply to the divisions provided for in 76-3-207 except those  
22 under 76-3-207(1)(b). Nothing in this section is intended to prohibit the extension, construction, or  
23 reconstruction of or other improvements to a public sewage system within a well isolation zone that extends  
24 onto land that is dedicated for use as a right-of-way for roads, railroads, or utilities.
- 25 (j) criteria for granting waivers and deviations from the standards and technical procedures  
26 adopted under subsections (6)(e) through (6)(i);
- 27 (k) evidence to establish that, if a public water supply system or a public sewage system is  
28 proposed, provision has been made for the system and, if other methods of water supply or sewage disposal

1 are proposed, evidence that the systems will comply with state and local laws and regulations that are in effect  
2 at the time of submission of the subdivision application under this chapter. Evidence that the systems will  
3 comply with local laws and regulations must be in the form of a certification from the local health department as  
4 provided by department rule.

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

9 (m) eligibility requirements for municipalities and county water and/or sewer districts to qualify as a  
10 certifying authority under the provisions of 76-4-127.

11 (7) The requirements of subsection (6)(i) regarding proposed drainfield mixing zones and proposed  
12 well isolation zones apply to all subdivisions or divisions excluded from review under 76-4-125 created after  
13 October 1, 2021, except as provided in subsections (6)(i)(i) and (6)(i)(ii).

14 (8) The department shall:

15 (a) conduct a biennial review of experimental wastewater system components that have been  
16 granted a waiver or deviation as provided in subsection (6)(j);

17 (b) utilize relevant analysis of wastewater system components approved in other states and data  
18 from peer-reviewed third-party studies to conduct the review provided in subsection (8)(a);

19 (c) propose those experimental wastewater system components that meet the purposes and  
20 provisions of this part for adoption into the rules pursuant to this section; and

21 (d) report to the local government interim committee biennially, in accordance with 5-11-210, the  
22 number and type of experimental wastewater system components reviewed and the number and type of system  
23 components approved and provide written findings to explain why a system component was reviewed but not  
24 approved.

25 (9) Review and certification or denial of certification that a division of land is not subject to sanitary  
26 restrictions under this part may occur only under those rules in effect when a complete application is submitted  
27 to the reviewing authority, except that in cases in which current rules would preclude the use for which the lot  
28 was originally intended, the applicable requirements in effect at the time the lot was recorded must be applied.

1 In the absence of specific requirements, minimum standards necessary to protect public health and water  
2 quality apply.

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

- 6 (a) the reason for the denial or condition imposition;
- 7 (b) the evidence that justifies the denial or condition imposition; and
- 8 (c) information regarding the appeal process for the denial or condition imposition.

9 (11) The department may adopt rules that provide technical details and clarification regarding the  
10 water and sanitation information required to be submitted under 76-3-622.

11 ~~(12) (a) Except as provided in subsection (12)(b) and pursuant to subsection (12)(c), the~~ The rules  
12 must provide for the review of subdivisions consistent with 76-4-114 by an independent reviewer if the  
13 department certifies under subsection (4) of this section that the independent reviewer is competent to conduct  
14 the review.

15 ~~(b) (i) Except as provided in subsection (12)(b)(ii), an independent reviewer may not review public~~  
16 water supply systems, public sewage systems, or extensions of or connections to these systems.

17 ~~(ii) An independent reviewer may be certified by the department to review subdivisions proposed~~  
18 to connect to existing municipal or county water and/or sewer district water and wastewater systems previously  
19 approved by the department if no extension of the system is required.

20 ~~(c) (i) If 10% or more of the applications received during a calendar quarter remain overdue~~  
21 applications at the end of the quarter, the department shall assign applications to independent reviewers in a  
22 number not to exceed the number of overdue applications, unless an independent reviewer is not available.

23 ~~(ii) The department may assign applications to independent reviewers if fewer than 10% of the~~  
24 applications received by the department in a calendar quarter are overdue at the end of that quarter.

25 ~~(d)(c)~~ The department shall reimburse independent reviewers at the same rate the department  
26 reimburses local departments or local boards of health certified under subsection (3).

27 ~~(13) (a) As used in this section, "overdue application" means an application for which the~~  
28 department has not provided a response within 40 days under 76-4-114(3)(c)(i)(A) and that remains



1 ~~outstanding at the end of a quarter.~~

2 ~~(b) The term does not include applications for which:~~

3 ~~(i) no more than one extension has been granted to the department under 76-4-114(4); or~~

4 ~~(ii) any number of extensions under 76-4-114(5) have been granted.~~

5 ~~(13) Prior to being assigned an application for review, an independent reviewer shall identify any~~  
6 ~~conflict of interest related to the project under potential review. If the independent reviewer identifies a conflict~~  
7 ~~of interest, the application for review must be assigned to a different independent reviewer.~~

8 ~~(14) An independent reviewer acting under the requirements of this chapter shall comply with the~~  
9 ~~provisions of Title 2, chapter 6, for public information requests."~~

10

11 **Section 4.** Section 76-4-105, MCA, is amended to read:

12 **"76-4-105. Subdivision fees -- subdivision program funding.** (1) The department shall adopt rules  
13 setting forth fees that do not exceed actual costs for reviewing plats and subdivisions, conducting inspections  
14 pursuant to 76-4-107, and conducting enforcement activities pursuant to 76-4-108. The rules must provide for a  
15 schedule of fees to be paid by the applicant to the department. The fees must be used for review of plats and  
16 subdivisions, conducting inspections pursuant to 76-4-107, and conducting enforcement activities pursuant to  
17 76-4-108. The fees must be based on the complexity of the subdivision, including but not limited to:

- 18 (a) ~~the~~ number of lots in the subdivision;
- 19 (b) the type of water system to serve the development;
- 20 (c) the type of sewage disposal to serve the development; and
- 21 (d) the degree of environmental research necessary to supplement the review procedure.

22 ~~(2) For extensions requested by the department of the deadlines in 76-4-114, the department shall~~  
23 ~~refund the applicant:~~

24 ~~(a) for the first extension, 40% of the fees;~~

25 ~~(b) for the second extension, 30% of the fees; and~~

26 ~~(c) for the third extension, the remaining fees paid.~~

27 ~~(2)(3)~~ The department shall adopt rules to determine the distribution of fees to the local reviewing  
28 authority for reviews conducted pursuant to 76-4-104, inspections conducted pursuant to 76-4-107, and

1 enforcement activities conducted pursuant to 76-4-108.

2 ~~(3)~~(4) The local reviewing authority may establish a fee to review applications, conduct site visits, and  
3 review applicable exemptions under this chapter. The fee must be paid directly to the local reviewing authority  
4 and may not exceed the local reviewing authority's actual cost that is not otherwise reimbursed by the  
5 department from fees adopted pursuant to this section."  
6

7 **Section 5.** Section 76-4-114, MCA, is amended to read:

8 **"76-4-114. Review of application.** Except as provided in 76-4-125, the applicant shall submit an  
9 application for review of a subdivision pursuant to the following procedure:

10 (1) An applicant may request a preapplication meeting with the reviewing authority prior to  
11 submitting an application. The reviewing authority shall schedule the requested meeting between the applicant  
12 and the reviewing authority within 30 days of receiving the request from the applicant. The meeting may be  
13 conducted in person, via telephone, or via teleconference. For informational purposes only, the reviewing agent  
14 shall identify the state laws and rules that may apply to the subdivision review process.

15 (2) If the proposed development includes onsite sewage disposal facilities, the applicant shall  
16 notify the designated agent of the local board of health prior to presenting the subdivision application to the  
17 reviewing authority. The agent may conduct a preliminary site assessment to determine whether the site meets  
18 applicable state and local requirements.

19 (3) (a) After submitting an application if required under the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act,  
20 the applicant shall submit an application to the reviewing authority. A subdivision application is considered to be  
21 received on the date of delivery to the reviewing authority when accompanied by the review fee established  
22 pursuant to 76-4-105.

23 (b) Within 15 days of the receipt of an application, the reviewing authority or independent reviewer  
24 shall determine whether the application contains the elements required by 76-4-115(1) to allow for review and  
25 shall notify the applicant of the reviewing authority's determination. If the reviewing authority or independent  
26 reviewer determines that elements are missing from the application, the reviewing agent or agency shall identify  
27 those elements in the notification. The applicant shall address the missing elements identified by the reviewing  
28 authority or independent reviewer. A determination that an application contains the required elements for review

1 as provided in this subsection (3)(b) does not ensure that the proposed subdivision will be approved and does  
2 not limit the ability of the reviewing authority or independent reviewer to request additional information during  
3 the review process.

4 (c) (i) After the reviewing authority or independent reviewer notifies the applicant that the  
5 application contains all of the required elements as provided by subsection (3)(b), the reviewing authority or  
6 independent reviewer shall make a final decision or a recommendation on the application. Except as provided  
7 by subsection (4), the reviewing authority or independent reviewer shall:

8 (A) make a final decision within 40 days of finding that the application contains all of the required  
9 elements if the reviewing authority is the department; or

10 (B) make a recommendation for approval to the department or deny the application within 30 days  
11 of finding that the application contains all of the required elements if the reviewing authority is a local  
12 department, ~~or local~~ board of health, or independent reviewer. If the department receives a recommendation for  
13 approval of the subdivision from a local department, ~~or local~~ board of health, or independent reviewer, the  
14 department shall make a final decision on the application within 10 days of receiving the recommendation ~~of the~~  
15 ~~reviewing authority~~.

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

19 (iii) If the reviewing authority or independent reviewer denies the application, the reviewing  
20 authority or independent reviewer shall identify the deficiencies that result in the denial in a notification to the  
21 applicant.

22 (d) (i) If the reviewing authority or independent reviewer denies an application and the applicant  
23 resubmits a corrected application within 30 days after the date of the denial letter, the reviewing authority or  
24 independent reviewer shall complete review of the resubmitted application within 30 days after receipt of the  
25 resubmitted application.

26 (ii) If the reviewing authority or independent reviewer denies an application and the applicant  
27 resubmits a corrected application after 30 days after the date of the denial letter, the reviewing authority or  
28 independent reviewer shall complete review of the resubmitted application within:

1 (A) 55 days after receipt of the resubmitted application if the reviewing authority is the department;

2 or

3 (B) 45 days after receipt of the resubmitted application if the reviewing authority is a local  
4 department, or local board of health, or independent reviewer.

5 (iii) If the review of the resubmitted application is conducted by a local department, or local board  
6 of health, or independent reviewer and the reviewing authority or independent reviewer makes a  
7 recommendation to the department for approval of the application, the department shall make a final decision  
8 on the application within 10 days after the local reviewing authority or independent reviewer completes its  
9 review under subsection (3)(d)(i) or (3)(d)(ii).

10 (4) Except as provided in subsections (6) and (7), if the reviewing authority or independent  
11 reviewer needs an extension of a deadline in this section to complete its review or if an applicant requests an  
12 extension of a deadline, then the reviewing authority or independent reviewer shall notify the applicant of the  
13 extension prior to the end of the review deadline. An extension under this subsection may not exceed 30 days;  
14 ~~however, the reviewing authority may issue more than one extension.~~ The reviewing authority may not issue  
15 more than one extension.

16 (5) The reviewing authority or independent reviewer may extend a deadline in this section until the  
17 items required in 76-4-115(2) are submitted. The reviewing authority or independent reviewer shall notify the  
18 applicant of the extension before the end of the review deadline. The reviewing authority or independent  
19 reviewer shall make a final decision within 30 days of receipt of the items required in 76-4-115(2).

20 (6) The department may extend a deadline under subsections (3)(c) and (3)(d) by 90 days if an  
21 environmental assessment is required.

22 (7) The department may extend a deadline under subsections (3)(c) and (3)(d) by 120 days if an  
23 environmental impact statement is required.

24 (8) An application is considered an overdue application if the department has not provided a  
25 response or met the statutory timelines provided in this section.

26

27 **Section 6.** Section 76-4-115, MCA, is amended to read:

28 **"76-4-115. Contents of application -- supplemental information.** (1) The application submitted

1 under 76-4-114 must include preliminary plans and specifications for the proposed development, information  
2 required under rules adopted pursuant to this chapter, and any additional information the applicant feels  
3 necessary.

4 (2) In addition to the information required for the submission of the application under subsection  
5 (1), before the reviewing authority or independent reviewer makes a final decision on the application, the  
6 applicant shall provide:

- 7 (a) a copy of the certification from the local health department required by 76-4-104(6)(k);
- 8 (b) if required under Title 76, chapter 3, an approval from the local governing body under Title 76,  
9 chapter 3; and
- 10 (c) any public comments or summaries of public comments collected as provided in 76-3-604(7)."

11  
12 **Section 7.** Section 76-4-116, MCA, is amended to read:

13 **"76-4-116. Annual report and quarterly reports.** (1) The department shall report annually to the  
14 environmental quality council in accordance with 5-11-210:

15 ~~(1) summarizing the review procedures adopted under Title 76, chapter 4, and recommending~~  
16 ~~recommendations as to whether statutory changes should be made to the process; and~~

17 ~~(2) noting the percentage and number of overdue applications for each calendar quarter and if~~  
18 ~~independent reviewers were necessary under 76-4-104(12)(c)(i).~~

19 ~~(2) The department shall report quarterly to the environmental quality council in accordance with 5-~~  
20 ~~11-210 the number and percentage of overdue files as provided in 76-4-114(8)."~~

21  
22 **Section 8.** Section 76-4-121, MCA, is amended to read:

23 **"76-4-121. Restrictions on subdivision activities.** A person may not dispose of any lot within a  
24 subdivision, erect any facility for the supply of water or disposal of sewage or solid waste, erect any building or  
25 shelter in a subdivision that requires facilities for the supply of water or disposal of sewage or solid waste, or  
26 occupy any permanent buildings in a subdivision until:

- 27 (1) a certificate of subdivision approval has been issued pursuant to 76-4-114 indicating that the  
28 reviewing authority has approved the subdivision application and that the subdivision is not subject to a sanitary

1 restriction;

2 (2) the certifying authority has provided certification pursuant to 76-4-127 that the subdivision will  
3 be provided with adequate municipal or county water and/or sewer district facilities ~~and or~~ adequate storm  
4 water drainage; or

5 (3) the subdivision is otherwise exempt from review under 76-4-125."

6

7 **Section 9.** Section 76-4-127, MCA, is amended to read:

8 **"76-4-127. Notice of certification that adequate storm water drainage ~~and or~~ adequate**  
9 **municipal facilities will be provided.** (1) To qualify for the exemption from review set out in 76-4-125(1)(d),  
10 the certifying authority shall send notice of certification to the reviewing authority that ~~adequate storm water~~  
11 ~~drainage and adequate municipal identifies the~~ facilities that will be provided for the subdivision. For a  
12 subdivision subject to Title 76, chapter 3, the certifying authority shall send notice of certification to the  
13 reviewing authority prior to final plat approval.

14 (2) The notice of certification must include the following:

15 (a) the name and address of the applicant;

16 (b) a copy of the preliminary plat included with the application for the proposed subdivision or a  
17 final plat when a preliminary plat is not necessary or, for a subdivision not subject to Title 76, chapter 3, a copy  
18 of the certificate of survey map or amended plat map or a declaration ~~and floor plan, including the layout of~~  
19 ~~each unit proposed to be recorded,~~ under Title 70, chapter 23, part 3;

20 (c) the number of parcels in the subdivision;

21 (d) a copy of any applicable zoning ordinances in effect;

22 (e) how construction of ~~the sewage disposal, and water supply,~~ solid waste, or storm water  
23 drainage systems or extensions to those systems will be financed;

24 (f) the relative location of the subdivision to the ~~city or the county water and/or sewer district~~  
25 boundaries of the certifying authority;

26 (g) (i) certification that ~~adequate municipal or county water and/or sewer district facilities for the~~  
27 ~~supply of water and disposal of sewage and solid waste~~ will be provided, including:

28 (A) the supply of water;

~~(B) the disposal of sewage; or~~

~~(C) storm water drainage.~~

~~(ii) The notice must identify which facilities, if any, cannot be certified by the certifying authority.~~

Facilities for subdivisions subject to 76-3-507 must be provided within the time that section provides.

(h) if water supply, sewage disposal, ~~or solid waste,~~ or storm water drainage facilities are not municipally owned, certification from the facility owners that adequate facilities will be available; ~~and~~

~~(i) certification that the certifying authority has or will review and approve plans to ensure adequate storm water drainage.~~

~~(3) If a certifying authority is unable to certify adequacy of one or more systems for the subdivision, the reviewing authority shall review the subdivision for adequacy and approval of the remaining services."~~

**NEW SECTION. Section 10. Certification of applicants to prequalify for review.** (1) The

department shall promulgate rules to allow for the certification of applicants, including the development of an educational curriculum and examination to enable an applicant to act as a certified reviewing agent pursuant to 76-4-104(4), and shall conduct reviews of subdivision applications submitted by certified applicants under 76-4-114.

(2) To become certified, an applicant:

(a) must be a registered sanitarian or licensed professional engineer with at least 5 years of professional experience;

(b) must have submitted at least one application that was approved by the department prior to applying for certification; and

(c) shall participate in all portions of the required curriculum and must successfully pass the examination developed by the department as provided in subsection (1).

(3) A certified applicant may only review subdivisions in which each proposed lot is to be serviced by an individual water well and an individual onsite wastewater treatment system.

(4) A certified applicant:

(a) shall meet all review timelines required for application review under 76-4-114;

(b) shall certify that the contents of an application, including any supplemental information as

1 required in 76-4-115, are complete;

2 (c) shall submit completed applications to the department;

3 (d) is not entitled to subdivision fees under 76-4-105; and

4 (e) shall assume all legal responsibility for the certified applicant's actions related to applications  
5 reviewed and completed by the certified applicant.

6 (5) Completed applications received by the department from a certified applicant must be  
7 considered approved by the reviewing agent and may be filed by the county clerk and recorder as allowed in  
8 76-4-122 if the application meets all other conditions of 76-4-122.

9 (6) (a) The department shall review at least 10% of all applications submitted by certified  
10 applicants in a calendar year using the standard review process allowed in this part.

11 (b) If the department reviews an application submitted by a certified applicant pursuant to  
12 subsection (6)(a) and finds that the certified applicant has violated a requirement of this part or a rule adopted  
13 or an order issued under this part, the department shall revoke the certified status of the applicant. An applicant  
14 whose certified status has been revoked as provided in this subsection (6)(b) may not apply for certification  
15 under this section and may be liable for penalties allowed in 76-4-109. The department or any other aggrieved  
16 person may seek additional remedies allowed in 76-4-110 or seek other redress under any available law.

17 (7) A certified applicant is required to renew the applicant's certification at least once every 2  
18 years.

19 (8) Nothing in this section restricts or denies the ability of the department to enforce the provisions  
20 of this chapter, including but not limited to the enforcement provisions provided in 76-4-108, 76-4-1001, and 76-  
21 4-1002.

22 (9) A certified applicant acting under the requirements of this section shall comply with the  
23 provisions of Title 2, chapter 6, for public information requests.

24

25 **NEW SECTION. Section 11. Implementation.** The department of environmental quality shall  
26 implement the requirements of [this act] within existing resources.

27

28 **NEW SECTION. Section 12. Saving clause.** [This act] does not affect rights and duties that



1 matured, penalties that were incurred, or proceedings that were begun before [the effective date of this act].

2  
3 NEW SECTION. Section 13. Nonseverability. It is the intent of the legislature that each part of [this  
4 act] is essentially dependent upon every other part, and if one part is held unconstitutional or invalid, all other  
5 parts are invalid.

6  
7 NEW SECTION. Section 14. Codification instruction. [Section 10] is intended to be codified as an  
8 integral part of Title 76, chapter 4, part 1, and the provisions of Title 76, chapter 4, part 1, apply to [section 10].

9  
10 NEW SECTION. Section 15. Applicability. [This act] applies to applications received on or after  
11 October 1, 2023.

12  
13 ~~NEW SECTION. Section 9. Termination. [This act] terminates December 31, 2027.~~

14 - END -