

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

INTRODUCED BY F. THOMAS

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF ALTERNATIVE SEPTIC SYSTEMS AND THE IMPACTS OF AGING SEPTIC SYSTEMS ON MONTANA WATER BODIES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 67TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, more than one in five households in the United States depend on septic systems to treat wastewater through both natural and technological processes, typically beginning with solids settling in a septic tank, and ending with wastewater treatment in the soil via the drainfield; and

WHEREAS, septic systems can protect public health, preserve valuable water resources, and maintain economic vitality in a community; and

WHEREAS, SEPTIC SYSTEMS HAVE A FINITE LIFE EXPECTANCY TO EFFECTIVELY TREAT WASTEWATER INCLUDING PATHOGENS, NUTRIENTS, AND POLLUTANTS; AND

WHEREAS, PATHOGENS AND NUTRIENTS CAN BE DELETERIOUS TO HUMAN HEALTH AND DEGRADE STREAMS, RIVERS, AND LAKES; AND

WHEREAS, RESEARCH ON MONTANA WATER BODIES HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE PRESENCE OF SEPTIC LEACHATES; AND

WHEREAS, EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES ARE COMPLICATED BY PHYSICAL, FINANCIAL, JURISDICTIONAL, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES; AND

WHEREAS, septic systems are a cost-effective and long-term option for treating wastewater, particularly in less densely populated areas; and

WHEREAS, there is no one-size-fits-all type of septic system; septic system design is specific to the soil type, site conditions, and usage levels; and

WHEREAS, a thorough review of septic system regulations in Montana and other states that includes an examination of alternative septic systems would benefit public health, the environment, and residents in rural communities.



1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 STATE OF MONTANA:

3 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to
4 section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

5 (1) evaluate current state and local regulations for designing and permitting septic systems and compare
6 those regulations to other states; ~~and~~

7 (2) ASSIMILATE INFORMATION FROM CASE STUDIES AND RESEARCH ON SEPTIC SYSTEM PROGRAMS IN MONTANA
8 AND OTHER STATES;

9 (3) RESEARCH FUNDING NEEDS AND POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES; AND

10 ~~(2)(4)~~ examine alternative septic systems and provide recommendations to encourage the use of
11 alternative septic systems.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
13 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
15 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2020.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
17 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 67th Legislature.

18 - END -