

March 13, 2025
House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
SB 2267

Good morning Chairman Porter and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tom Schimelfenig. I've been in the onsite wastewater industry for 47 years, and I've been licensed by the N.D. State Plumbing Board for 38 years.

I also currently serve as chairman of the Onsite Wastewater Recycling Technical Committee (OWRTC), established in N.D. Century Code during the 2021 legislative session.

I am here to testify in favor of SB 2267, as we need change in the onsite wastewater industry.

I have been licensed through the North Dakota State Plumbing Board since 1987, the year the North Dakota Sewer and Water Service Code was first adopted. That document, 43-18.2 Rules and Regulations of Sewer and Water Installation, continues to guide our industry's practices today. It was derived from the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), which has been in existence for 80 years. The UPC was established by the The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials, a technical expert on plumbing and mechanical issues since 1926.

SB 2267 leaves oversight of the onsite wastewater industry with the North Dakota State Plumbing Board, which is where it belongs, in my opinion, and eliminates the need for professionals to license with two separate entities in order to install water and sewer service lines.

The heartburn is that there is no guidance regarding a universal code for onsite wastewater systems, and there is no provision that provides the onsite wastewater industry a voice regarding establishment of the uniform statewide code or a seat at the table on the plumbing board.

I appreciate your time and consideration, and I am willing to answer any questions you may have.

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