Testimony

To the

Senate Industry, Business, and Labor Committee

on

SB 2256

Good morning, Chairman Larsen and members of the committee. I am Daphne JohnsonClark, Team Leader for Environmental Health Services for Upper Missouri District Health Unit and have been with UMDHU since 2003. UMDHU provides local public health services to Divide, McKenzie, Mountrail, and Williams counties. I have a staff of 2 Environmental Health Practitioners. One staff member is trained to do site evaluations, inspect onsite septic systems for proper installation and/or repair, work with homeowners and contractors to develop septic plans, and to license contractors. She has completed several trainings including with University of Minnesota Onsite Sewage Treatment Program, attended in state trainings and conferences to obtain continuing education credits to maintain state EHP and working towards her national REHS credential. In 2021 we issued 165 permits issued for septic systems. There were 103 contractor licenses in 2022.

I am in support of SB2256. I had the privilege to serve on the Onsite Wastewater Technical Committee during the interim. I feel we worked hard in a short period of time however there are still some items that need to be worked through.

I was at the health unit during the oil boom, and I believe that gives me a unique perspective.

1. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) should be added to the Board because there are parts of the code that pertain to their office, and they should have a seat at the table. This would be in addition to the 4 Public health representatives and the 4 installers. During the oil boom DEQ and UMDHU worked closely together on septic issues as it was one of the largest public health issues at that time. Our working together as a team was indispensable. Having all parties concerned at the table is important to address any issues that may arise and to serve our communities the best we can.

Thank you for your time.