

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1541 ( In support of )  
Brent Beechie, Executive Director, North Dakota State Plumbing Board

For several years now, a small group of septic tank and drain field installers have been trying to move licensing and inspections of private sewage disposal systems away from local and district health units. There is another bill (SB 2267) that has a committee hearing this afternoon with Agriculture and Veterans Affairs, with the objective of moving private sewage disposal systems (PSDS) licensure and inspections away from the local and district health units and into the plumbing board, which has been unsuccessfully tried several times previous. Plumbing and private sewage disposal systems are two completely different disciplines that myself and all of my inspectors know nothing about. The problem these installers are having is that if they have a problem with the design, installation, or inspection of the septic tank and drain field, they have no one to turn to for a second opinion and no one to complain to, with no formal way to resolve their conflicts with that health unit.

I believe this bill would effectively take care of that problem.

The local and district health units could possibly still conduct inspections of private sewage disposal systems, and the installers would have a uniform standard for licensing and permitting, and it would give them a formal committee to voice their issues, concerns, and appeals.

The Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) already works with the local and district health units on larger sewage disposal systems (systems serving 25 or more people), and they have the expertise and knowledge to fulfill the requirements of this bill, and to also create and complete the statewide technical guide for private sewage disposal systems.

In my opinion, there are a few areas of this bill that could require further explanation or clarification.

- 1) Page 2, lines 5 and 7, inspections of sewer, septic, and private water systems
- 2) Page 2, line 16, Certain septic, sewer, and private water systems
- 3) Page 2, line 21, All of section 3. Transfer-Funds under the control of the State Board of Plumbing to Department of Environment Quality- Septic Systems