

## Chris Taggart

---

**From:** Darra Norgaard <darra@mt.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:34 PM  
**To:** Jeff Burrows; Chris A. Hoffman; Greg Chilcott; Chris Taggart; Ravalli County Commissioners Office  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Draft Wastewater Regulations Comment

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you very much for postponing the Board of Health public meeting tomorrow. As a real estate broker who lives and works in Ravalli County, this meeting is very important to me, but so is adhering to Covid-19 safety protocol.

I want to express my opposition of the proposed language changes. Of primary concern is Article 7. Language in 7.1.3 is very vague about what is involved in the Review Process, and the conclusions drawn may be discretionary and subjective. Also, the term “timely manner” is unspecified and open to interpretation. Further, subjecting all property to review at the time of sale would be cumbersome, and a potential hotbed for litigation. If, prior to a sale, a septic system has been pumped, inspected, and found to be working properly how is it failed any more so than 35-year architectural shingles that have been on for 20 years? If a component of a home is functioning well, it can’t be called “failed” just because it might fail at some unknown future date. If it works properly, it works. Defining a system as non-conforming based on permits does not mean the system has failed.

Granted, we want to keep our valley beautiful, our residents healthy, and our water sources safe. But I do not think these over-stringent septic regulations are the means for doing that. In the more than 16 years I’ve been selling real estate in the Bitterroot Valley, I’ve *maybe* had three well water tests come back “unsatisfactory” with a presence of coliform, and none have ever tested positive for nitrates. This would indicate to me that there is very little contamination of aquifers happening as a result of non-compliant septic systems. As far as surface water contamination – I would venture to guess that more nitrates are entering streams and the Bitterroot River from agricultural applications – fertilizers, chemicals, livestock, etc.

Would it be more reasonable to require that septic systems be brought into compliance at such a time as they fail or need repair?

Thank you for your consideration,

*Darra L. Norgaard, BRO/GRI*  
*Real Estate Brokers of Montana*  
*(406) 531-7791*  
*RRE-BRO-LIC 13011*  
[www.realestatebrokersofmt.com](http://www.realestatebrokersofmt.com)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you believe the email to be malicious and/or phishing email, please use the **Phish Alert** button.