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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH
SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. **1476**

March 1, 2007

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to the environment; modifying provisions for individual sewage
1.3 treatment systems; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2006,
1.4 section 115.55, subdivisions 1, 2, 3, by adding a subdivision.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 115.55, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.7 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to sections
1.8 115.55 to 115.56.

1.9 (b) "Advisory committee" means the Advisory Committee on Individual Sewage
1.10 Treatment Systems established under the individual sewage treatment system rules. The
1.11 advisory committee must be appointed to ensure geographic representation of the state
1.12 and include elected public officials.

1.13 (c) "Applicable requirements" means:

1.14 (1) local ordinances that comply with the individual sewage treatment system rules,
1.15 as required in subdivision 2; or

1.16 (2) in areas not subject to the ordinances described in clause (1), the individual
1.17 sewage treatment system rules.

1.18 (d) "City" means a statutory or home rule charter city.

1.19 (e) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency.

1.20 (f) "Dwelling" means a building or place used or intended to be used by human
1.21 occupants as a single-family or two-family unit.

1.22 (g) "Individual sewage treatment system" or "system" means a sewage treatment
1.23 system, or part thereof, serving a dwelling, other establishment, or group thereof, that
1.24 uses subsurface soil treatment and disposal.

2.1 (h) "Individual sewage treatment system professional" means an inspector, installer,
2.2 site evaluator or designer, or pumper.

2.3 (i) "Individual sewage treatment system rules" means rules adopted by the agency
2.4 that establish minimum standards and criteria for the design, location, installation, use,
2.5 and maintenance of individual sewage treatment systems.

2.6 (j) "Inspector" means a person who inspects individual sewage treatment systems for
2.7 compliance with the applicable requirements.

2.8 (k) "Installer" means a person who constructs or repairs individual sewage treatment
2.9 systems.

2.10 (l) "Local unit of government" means a township, city, or county.

2.11 (m) "Performance-based system" means a system that is designed specifically for a
2.12 site and the environmental conditions on that site and designed to adequately protect the
2.13 public health and the environment and provide long-term performance. At a minimum, a
2.14 performance based system must ensure that applicable water quality standards are met in
2.15 both ground and surface water that ultimately receive the treated wastewater.

2.16 (n) "Pumper" means a person who maintains components of individual sewage
2.17 treatment systems including, but not limited to, septic, aerobic, and holding tanks.

2.18 ~~(n)~~ (o) "Seasonal dwelling" means a dwelling that is occupied or used for less than
2.19 180 days per year and less than 120 consecutive days.

2.20 ~~(o)~~ (p) "Septic system tank" means any covered receptacle designed, constructed,
2.21 and installed as part of an individual sewage treatment system.

2.22 ~~(p)~~ (q) "Site evaluator or designer" means a person who:

2.23 (1) investigates soils and site characteristics to determine suitability, limitations, and
2.24 sizing requirements; and

2.25 (2) designs individual sewage treatment systems.

2.26 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 115.55, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

2.27 Subd. 2. **Local ordinances.** (a) All counties ~~that did not adopt ordinances by May~~
2.28 ~~7, 1994, or that do not have ordinances;~~ must adopt ordinances that comply with revisions
2.29 to the individual sewage treatment system rules by January 1, 1999, unless all towns and
2.30 cities in the county have adopted such ordinances 2008. County ordinances must apply to
2.31 all areas of the county other than cities or towns that have adopted ordinances that comply
2.32 with this section and are as strict as the applicable county ordinances. ~~Any ordinance~~
2.33 ~~adopted by a local unit of government before May 7, 1994, to regulate individual sewage~~
2.34 ~~treatment systems must be in compliance with the individual sewage treatment system~~
2.35 ~~rules by January 1, 1998.~~

3.1 (b) A copy of each ordinance adopted under this subdivision must be submitted to
3.2 the commissioner upon adoption.

3.3 (c) A local unit of government must make available to the public upon request a
3.4 written list of any differences between its ordinances and rules adopted under this section.

3.5 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 115.55, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

3.6 Subd. 3. **Rules.** (a) The agency shall adopt rules containing minimum standards and
3.7 criteria for the design, location, installation, use, and maintenance of individual sewage
3.8 treatment systems. The rules must include:

3.9 (1) how the agency will ensure compliance under subdivision 2;

3.10 (2) how local units of government shall enforce ordinances under subdivision 2,
3.11 including requirements for permits and inspection programs;

3.12 (3) how the advisory committee will participate in review and implementation of
3.13 the rules;

3.14 (4) provisions for ~~alternative~~ nonstandard systems and performance-based systems;

3.15 (5) provisions for handling and disposal of effluent;

3.16 (6) provisions for system abandonment; and

3.17 (7) procedures for variances, including the consideration of variances based on cost
3.18 and variances that take into account proximity of a system to other systems.

3.19 (b) The agency shall consult with the advisory committee before adopting rules
3.20 under this subdivision.

3.21 (c) Notwithstanding the repeal of the agency rule under which the commissioner
3.22 has established a list of warrantied individual sewage treatment systems, the warranties
3.23 for all systems so listed as of the effective date of the repeal shall continue to be valid
3.24 for the remainder of the warranty period.

3.25 (d) The rules required in paragraph (a) must also address the following:

3.26 (1) a definition of redoximorphic features and other criteria that can be used by
3.27 system designers and inspectors;

3.28 (2) direction on the interpretation of observed soil features that may be
3.29 redoximorphic and their relation to zones of seasonal saturation; and

3.30 (3) procedures on how to resolve professional disagreements on seasonally saturated
3.31 soils.

3.32 These rules must be in place by March 31, 2006.

3.33 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 115.55, is amended by adding a subdivision to
3.34 read:

4.1 Subd. 12. **Advisory committee; county individual sewage treatment system**
4.2 **management plan.** (a) A county may adopt an individual sewage treatment system
4.3 management plan that describes how the county plans on carrying out individual sewage
4.4 treatment system needs. The commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency shall form an
4.5 advisory committee to determine what the plans should address. The advisory committee
4.6 shall be made up of representatives of the Association of Minnesota Counties, Pollution
4.7 Control Agency, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Department of Health, and other
4.8 public agencies that have an interest in individual sewage treatment systems.

4.9 (b) The advisory committee shall advise the agency on the standards, management,
4.10 monitoring, and reporting requirements for performance-based systems.

4.11 **Sec. 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

4.12 The commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency shall establish a database of
4.13 best practices regarding the installation, management, and maintenance of individual
4.14 sewage treatment systems. The database must be made available to any interested public
4.15 or private party.

4.16 **Sec. 6. APPROPRIATION.**

4.17 \$..... is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of agriculture to
4.18 be distributed under the Department of Agriculture's best management practice program
4.19 for counties to set up a locally managed revolving loan fund used to improve individual
4.20 sewage treatment systems. This appropriation is a supplement to local water planning
4.21 grants.