

HOUSE BILL NO. 923

INTRODUCED BY L. JONES, S. GIST, G. OBLANDER

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS FROM A NONDEGRADATION AUTHORIZATION; DIRECTING THE AMENDMENT OF ARM 17.30.716; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING EFFECTIVE DATES."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Department to amend rule. By January 1, 2026, the department of environmental quality shall amend ARM 17.30.716 to provide for a categorical exclusion from a nondegradation authorization provided in 75-5-317 if a county commission demonstrates to the department that the commission has established an area where:

- (1) drinking water wells are prohibited; and
- (2) the absorption trench is at least 1,000 feet from downstream high-quality surface waters.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$10,000 from the general fund to the department of environmental quality for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, to amend the department's rules pursuant to [section 1] and provide guidance for a categorical exclusion from a nondegradation authorization.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective dates. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), [this act] is effective on passage and approval.

- (2) [Section 2] is effective July 1, 2025.

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