

## **HB 5473: An Act Requiring the Inspection of Septic Systems**

*Comments submitted by Robert Graham prior to the hearing Feb 18, 2011:*

A healthy society demands adequate treatment of human excretory waste, and those who fail to do so risk spreading deadly disease such as cholera – as has occurred recently in Haiti and other impoverished nations.

Though we in Connecticut take pride in our advanced technologies and high standard of living, in many ways our waste-treatment policies have a fundamental flaw that potentially exposes us to the same health risks as those living in Third World countries.

Sewage treatment in Connecticut now consists of either regional systems that pipe waste to central treatment centers, or individual, on-site septic systems. There are many different types of individual systems, and their reliability varies widely depending on age, design and how well they have been maintained. As such, local health inspectors have been challenged determining their adequacy. Many don't check systems now unless they see raw sewage oozing from the ground.

As a retired physician, I feel strongly that we need better groundwater safeguards. Failing to require inspection and any necessary upgrades of individual septic systems when a property is sold or changes hands, potentially allows human waste, containing dangerous pathogens, to enter our water supplies.

We need a law requiring such timely, comprehensive evaluations and improvements of individual waste-treatment systems.

The following is such a law enacted recently in Iowa. Please consider doing the same in Connecticut.

### **Iowa's Time of Transfer Inspection Program**

Iowa's time of transfer septic system inspection law (SF261) was passed by the Iowa legislature in April of 2008 and took effect July 1, 2009. The new law requires that every home/building served by a septic system have that septic system inspected prior to the sale or deed transfer for the home/building. The purpose of the law is to eliminate sub-standard or polluting septic systems. A sub-standard septic system is one that has no treatment

(secondary treatment) following the septic tank or has a secondary treatment system that has failed. These sub-standard septic systems pose an environmental and public health hazard and require repair. If you have a septic system with a septic tank AND a secondary treatment system such as a seepage (leach) field, sand filter or other approved device, and it is not creating a public health or environmental hazard, it does not have to meet current code. All inspections must be conducted by an inspector that has been certified by the department.

- [List of Certified Time of Transfer Inspectors,\\*pdf](#)
- [2010 Certified Time of Transfer Inspector renewal process,\\*pdf](#)

### **Certified Time of Transfer Inspectors**

To become a certified time of transfer inspector you must fill out the Certified Time of Transfer Inspector Application (see below), Form 542-0192, and submit it to the DNR. To qualify for the time of transfer inspector training you must have one of the following:

1. Two (2) years of experience in the operation, installation, inspection, design or maintenance of private sewage disposal systems (onsite wastewater treatment or septic systems).
2. Completed the "Basics of Onsite 101" class offered by the Onsite Wastewater Training Center of Iowa or an equivalent class approved by the department.

Submit your application to:

Time of Transfer Inspector Certification  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
502 E. 9th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034

Once your application is approved, you must sign up for and complete the time of transfer inspector training offered by Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC)/Onsite Wastewater Training Center of Iowa and pass the test given at the end of the training. The cost for the Time of Transfer Inspector class is \$300 payable to DMACC. Sign up for the Inspector Training class at the [Onsite Wastewater Training Center of Iowa website](#) or by calling DMACC at 515-964-6464 Once you have complete the training and the test, you will be notified of the test results and billed for the test fee (\$50) and the certification fee (\$300), payable to IDNR, if you pass. Pay the invoice and you will receive your certification.