

Thank you, committee, for accepting my testimony in **support of HJ 44**, and urging the committee to prioritize an interim study of endocrine-disrupting and other harmful chemicals in our water supply.

Per an MSU article printed in 2008, “Several studies have looked for and found common pharmaceuticals at specific sites in Montana. Among those studies showing trace pharmaceuticals are work in 2003 by the University of Montana that looked at septic system leachate at Frenchtown High School, work in 2005 by Montana government offices that found trace amounts in ground water in the Helena valley, including in some drinking water wells, work in 2007 that found traces in surface water below the Helena wastewater treatment site, and a 2007 statewide study by the Montana Bureau of Mining and Geology that showed trace amounts in some wells in agricultural and rural subdivision areas” (source: <https://www.montana.edu/news/5694>).

Montana has been aware of “emerging contaminants” such as pharmaceuticals, PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and other chemicals since the early 2000s, but why do we not know exactly what we are drinking from our wells and public water systems? With a steady decline in Montana birth rates, our water supply is a crucial factor that needs to be examined. Per the March of Dimes data, the **fertility rate in Montana in 2023 was 52.2 per 1,000 women, ages 15-44, compared to 67.2 in 2013** (source: <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/data?reg=99&top=2&stop=1&lev=1&slev=4&obj=1&sreg=30>).

With rising rates of prescription use of all disorders (depression, mental health, chronic pain, chemical abortion, cancers), Montanans deserve the right to have their water supply evaluated for these chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

I’m not sure how this funding is currently being used, but it does appear that Montana received substantial federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to address emerging contaminants in our water system,

per a DEQ application made in February 2023. Let's put that money to good use and prioritize clean drinking water for Montana citizens.

Sincerely,

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