

Senate File 2255 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2255
BY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 3125)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the treatment of private sewage disposal
2 systems, including monitoring, maintenance, and reporting
3 requirements, and including applicability provisions.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 455B.241 Definitions.

2 As used in this part 3 of subchapter III, unless the context
3 otherwise requires:

4 1. "*Aerobic treatment unit*" means a disposal system
5 employing bacterial action that is maintained by the
6 utilization of air or oxygen and includes the aeration plant
7 and equipment and the method of final effluent disposal.

8 2. "*Certified technician*" means a person who is certified
9 in accordance with the manufacturer to monitor, maintain, and
10 inspect the system.

11 3. "*Class A proprietary treatment system*" or "*class A system*"
12 means a media-based or passive secondary treatment system
13 including but not limited to a peat moss biofilter, coconut
14 fiber filter, synthetic foam filter, polystyrene bead media
15 filter, or textile filter.

16 4. "*Class B proprietary treatment system*" or "*class B system*"
17 means a secondary treatment system that relies on mechanical
18 aeration or fixed film processes.

19 5. "*Packed bed media filter*" means a watertight structure
20 filled with uniformly sized media that is normally placed over
21 an underdrain system. The wastewater is dosed onto the surface
22 of the media through a distribution network and is allowed to
23 percolate through the media to the underdrain system. The
24 underdrain collects the filtrate and discharges the final
25 effluent.

26 6. "*Private sewage disposal system*" means a system that
27 provides for the treatment or disposal of domestic sewage from
28 four or fewer dwelling units or the equivalent of less than
29 sixteen individuals on a continuing basis, including domestic
30 waste, whether residential or nonresidential, but not including
31 industrial waste of any flow rate except as provided for in
32 567 IAC 68.8. "*Private sewage disposal system*" includes but is
33 not limited to a septic tank, holding tank for waste, chemical
34 toilet, impervious vault toilet, or portable toilet.

35 7. "*Proprietary treatment system*" means either a class A or

1 class B system.

2 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 455B.242 **Monitoring and maintenance**
3 **requirements.**

4 1. Prior to the installation of a private sewage disposal
5 system, the owner shall enter a monitoring and maintenance
6 contract with a certified technician. The contract shall be
7 required for the life of the system, and a copy of the contract
8 shall be provided to the county sanitarian.

9 2. A private sewage disposal system shall be inspected,
10 monitored, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's
11 specifications. However, a class A system shall be inspected
12 at least annually. A class B system shall be inspected at
13 least twice per year or more frequently if required by the
14 manufacturer's specifications.

15 3. All monitoring and maintenance shall be performed by
16 a certified technician. A certified technician shall report
17 results to the system owner and to the county sanitarian. All
18 inspections shall be performed by the county sanitarian and
19 such results shall be reported as required in section 455B.243.

20 4. For a class A proprietary treatment system, a media
21 filter such as a peat moss biofilter, coconut fiber filter,
22 synthetic foam filter, polystyrene bead media filter, or
23 textile filter may be used if the site is unacceptable for
24 a soil absorption system and an intermittent sand filter.
25 Preference should be given to the use of a class A system due
26 to the higher maintenance requirements of aerobic treatment
27 units and fixed film systems. An aerobic treatment unit may be
28 used only when the site is unacceptable for a soil absorption
29 system or an intermittent sand filter. Because of the higher
30 maintenance requirements of aerobic treatment units, preference
31 should be given to packed bed media filters where conditions
32 allow.

33 5. For a class B proprietary treatment system, an aerobic
34 treatment unit and modular fixed film system may only be used
35 when the site is unacceptable for a soil absorption system,

1 intermittent sand filter, and class A system. A class B system
2 shall not be used for a vacation home, church, event facility,
3 or infrequent-use facility.

4 6. An aerobic treatment unit that discharges on the surface
5 of the ground shall have either an intermittently operated slow
6 sand filter or a free access sand filter on the discharge, with
7 both types of sand filters sized at a maximum of five gallons
8 per square foot of design flow. The free access sand filter
9 shall have a minimum of twenty-four inches of filter sand over
10 the top of a collection system. The free access sand filter
11 cover shall be easily opened to clean the sand surface.

12 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. 455B.243 Reporting.

13 1. When a county sanitarian conducts an inspection of
14 a private sewage disposal system, at least the following
15 information shall be recorded:

16 a. The date of the review.

17 b. The type of proprietary treatment system.

18 c. Whether the system is functioning correctly or
19 functioning incorrectly.

20 d. If the system is functioning incorrectly, the primary
21 reason for the deficiency, including but not limited to:

22 (1) Improper installation.

23 (2) Lack of required maintenance.

24 (3) Failure to meet expected treatment performance.

25 2. The county sanitarian shall submit the information to the
26 department in the form and manner prescribed by the department.

27 3. The department shall compile the information and
28 shall maintain a publicly accessible database summarizing
29 inspection outcomes. The database shall not include personally
30 identifiable information.

31 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 455B.244 Rulemaking authority.

32 The department may adopt rules as necessary to administer
33 this part.

34 Sec. 5. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to the monitoring,
35 maintenance, and inspection of private sewage disposal systems,

1 as defined in section 455B.241, as enacted by this Act,
2 installed on or after July 1, 2026.

3 EXPLANATION

4 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
5 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

6 This bill relates to the treatment of private sewage
7 disposal systems, including monitoring, maintenance, and
8 reporting requirements.

9 The bill defines key terms, including "aerobic treatment
10 unit", "private sewage disposal system", and "proprietary
11 treatment system", classifying proprietary treatment systems
12 into class A systems, which are media-based or passive
13 secondary treatment systems, and class B systems, which rely on
14 mechanical aeration or fixed film processes.

15 The bill requires, prior to installation of a private
16 sewage disposal system, the owner to enter into a monitoring
17 and maintenance contract with a certified technician. The
18 contract is required for the life of the system, and a
19 copy must be provided to the county sanitarian. The bill
20 requires systems to be inspected, monitored, and maintained in
21 accordance with manufacturer specifications, and sets minimum
22 inspection frequencies for each system type. The bill requires
23 a certified technician to perform monitoring and maintenance
24 and to report the results to the system owner and the county
25 sanitarian. The bill requires the county sanitarian to perform
26 all inspections and report the results as provided in the bill.

27 The bill allows a class A system to use a media filter
28 when a site is unsuitable for a soil absorption system and an
29 intermittent sand filter, and expresses a preference for class
30 A systems. The bill allows the use of an aerobic treatment
31 unit only when a site is unacceptable for a soil absorption
32 system or an intermittent sand filter, and expresses a
33 preference for packed bed media filters where conditions allow.
34 For a class B system, the bill only allows an aerobic treatment
35 unit and modular fixed film system when a site is unsuitable

1 for a soil absorption system, intermittent sand filter, and
2 class A system. The bill also prohibits the use of a class B
3 system for a vacation home, church, event facility, and any
4 other infrequent-use facility.

5 The bill requires an aerobic treatment unit that discharges
6 on the surface of the ground to use either an intermittently
7 operated slow sand filter or a free access sand filter that
8 meets certain specifications.

9 The bill requires a county sanitarian to record certain
10 information when inspecting a private sewage disposal system,
11 including the date of review, the type of system, whether the
12 system is functioning correctly, and, if not, the primary
13 reason for the deficiency. The county sanitarian must submit
14 the information to the department of natural resources
15 (department). The bill requires the department to compile
16 the information and maintain a publicly accessible database
17 summarizing inspection outcomes, without including personally
18 identifiable information.

19 The bill authorizes the department to adopt rules as
20 necessary to administer the bill.

21 The bill applies to the monitoring, maintenance, and
22 inspection of private sewage disposal systems installed on or
23 after July 1, 2026.