# Plumas County Environmental Health

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Date: October 19, 2016

To: Onsite Wastewater Installers, Consultants and Interested Parties

From: Jerry Sipe, Environmental Health

RE: Proposed Changes to County Code

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As you probably remember, the state passed a law called AB 885 which requires counties to adopt statewide onsite wastewater regulations. While the original law was very flawed and impossible to implement, the new requirements are somewhat flexible and largely recognize effective septic system installation and construction standards like we have in Plumas County.

In order for Environmental Health to continue issuing septic system permits, the Regional Water Quality Control Board is requiring that we update the County Code. Fortunately, only minor changes are needed. The core of our existing septic systems program, which now will be called the onsite wastewater treatment systems or OWTS program, will not change. The percolation test procedures, piezometer requirements, consultant qualifications, permit processes, bedroom criteria, and construction standards all remain unchanged. This is a very good thing.

What will be changing are program details like increased separation distances from leachfields to public water sources including springs, wells, and surface water intakes; increased oversight of advanced treatment systems like intermittent sand filters and advanced treatment units; more specifics on waiver and variance processes for dealing with challenging site conditions; and increased groundwater monitoring and reporting by Environmental Health to the Regional Water Quality Control Board. In all, only relatively minor changes are needed to make our local code consistent with the new state regulations.

I have copies of the proposed code changes to email or hard copy mail if you are interested. We will also be posting info to the Environmental Health website soon. Finally, the Board of Supervisors is expected to consider these changes in late November or early December, so please let me know if you are interested in the specifics for that meeting.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 530-283-6367.

Thank you.