



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 387 (Substitute S-1)
Sponsor: Senator Dale W. Zorn
Committee: Energy and Technology

Date Completed: 10-20-15

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 615 (Supervisor of Wells) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to prohibit the Department of Environmental Quality from issuing a permit for drilling, or authorizing the use of, an injection well for disposal or storage within an area of karst geology in a county with a population of less than 155,000 that contains an urbanized area as described in the most recent Federal decennial census (i.e., Monroe County).

The prohibition would apply notwithstanding any other provision of Part 615 or the rules promulgated under it.

(According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an "urbanized area" consists of territory that meets the criteria for an urban area and includes at least 50,000 people. For the 2010 Census, an urban area comprises a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent territory containing nonresidential urban land uses and territory with low population density included to link outlying densely settled territory with the densely settled core. To qualify as an urban area, the specified territory must include at least 2,500 people, at least 1,500 of whom reside outside institutional group quarters.)

Proposed MCL 324.61505b

BACKGROUND

Karst geology is characterized by caves, sinkholes, and other underground drainage passages. These features are created when water mixes with carbon dioxide in the air and soil, forming an acid that dissolves particular types of rock, namely limestone, dolomite, and gypsum. As the corrosion occurs, the network of passages expands and provides a direct route to groundwater reserves. Normally, pollutants are filtered from surface water as it seeps downward through soil and bedrock. In karst terrain, however, the water flows easily and rapidly through the underground channels, bypassing the natural filtration process and potentially compromising aquifers.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.