

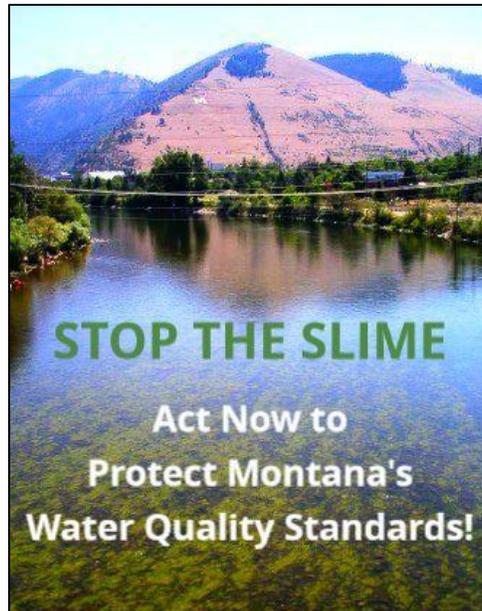
WATER WATCHDOG ACTION ALERT

BILL: SB164

WHAT IT DOES: Weakens State Water Quality Standards

CFC POSITION: OPPOSE

ACTION: Contact Senate Natural Resources Committee



Contact the Senate Natural Resources Committee and ask them to **OPPOSE SB164**

Montanans have worked hard to improve water quality in our state. And we invest millions of dollars per year to prevent nutrient pollution and mitigate for the natural and human-caused nutrients that do make it into our waterways. **Why on earth would we weaken the very water quality standards that have helped us tackle this slimy problem?**

Unfortunately [Senate Bill 164 \(SB164\)](#) would do just that. Please help stop this bad bill from worsening Montana's ground and surface water.

What this bill would do:

- It significantly alters state water quality standards to allow for increased discharges of nitrate into groundwater and waters influenced by groundwater.
- The current standard is 5.0 to 7.5 milligrams per liter. This bill weakens it to allow up to 10 milligrams per liter.
- It erodes a water quality standard Montanans can be proud of: Our current standard is more restrictive than the federal standard, as it wisely recognizes that unregulated discharges already contribute significant

amounts of nitrate pollution to ground and surface waters in Montana. That's why it's important to have protective standards for permitted discharges. Our current standards are a way to ensure we don't make an already bad problem worse.

Why it's bad:

- High levels of nitrate in drinking water are harmful to human health and are especially toxic for pregnant mothers and infants.
- When concentrated in rivers and streams during low flows, nitrate is one of the primary nutrients responsible for blooms of filamentous green algae -- that nasty river slime we all hate. Those algae blooms blanket stream bottoms and are harmful to fish and other aquatic life.
- Excessive levels of green algae also lead to clogged irrigation intakes and canals, costing ranchers precious time and money and impeding delivery of water to crops and fields.
- The problem is getting worse, not better: algae blooms are becoming increasingly common on some of our most iconic streams, including the [Clark Fork](#), [Gallatin](#) and [Smith](#) Rivers.

The Clark Fork River has come a long way, thanks to countless people speaking up for clean water. Today it still faces significant challenges from lingering pollution, and new threats such as climate change and rapid urbanization. The upper river is still recovering from a [fish kill in 2019](#), and a new [fish consumption advisory](#) was just issued for a nearly 150-mile stretch of river from Missoula to St Regis. This is no time to weaken standards that are helping to improve water quality in Montana.

What you can do:

Please contact the [Senate Natural Resources Committee](#) and tell them that **SB 164 is bad for human health, bad for Montana's rivers and streams, and a huge step in the wrong direction. Use hot links below for contact information for each member.**

Senate Natural Resources Committee Members:

Member	Assignment
Jeffrey W Welborn (R) SD 36	Chair
Pat Flowers (D) SD 32	Vice Chair
Jason D Small (R) SD 21	Vice Chair
Duane Ankney (R) SD 20	Member
Bob Brown (R) SD 7	Member
Jill Cohenour (D) SD 42	Member
Bruce Gillespie (R) SD 9	Member
Brian Hoven (R) SD 13	Member
Tom Jacobson (D) SD 11	Member
Mike Lang (R) SD 17	Member
Ryan Lynch (D) SD 37	Member
JP Pomnichowski (D) SD 33	Member

Thank you for speaking up for clean water in Montana!