

Resolution 2A

STRAIGHT PIPE SEPTIC SYSTEM (PASSED)

⇒ District of Lunenburg

WHEREAS a straight pipe septic system is defined as a pipe that carries raw sewage from a building and empties into a watercourse, ditch, or hole resulting in untreated sewage entering the environment; and

WHEREAS straight pipes were historically used by cities, towns, villages, and municipalities as an acceptable practice; and

WHEREAS all levels of government have worked together to fund sewage treatment plants to help eliminate a high percentage of raw sewage being dumped into Nova Scotia's natural environment; and

WHEREAS there are still straight pipes found throughout Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS untreated sewage entering the environment creates health risks to the general public; and

WHEREAS stopping pollution from straight pipes and non-functioning septic systems is a provincial responsibility;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM urge the Province of Nova Scotia create a law that when a dwelling is sold or a deed transferred that straight pipe systems and visually non-functioning septic systems be corrected within two years of the date of sale; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM urge the Province of Nova Scotia to work with all levels of government to create a loan assistance program to lessen the burden on homeowners for septic repairs and/or upgrades.

Response from:
Department of Environment

RESPONSE:

Straight pipes that release raw or partially treated sewage into the environment area province wide issue that is of major concern to all levels of government and the general public due to associated environmental and human health risks.

Raw sewage from straight pipes is consider an unauthorized release into the environment and is illegal under the Environment Act and the On-site Sewage Disposal Systems (OSSDS) Regulations.

NSE responds to numerous complaints every year related to septic system malfunctions, including straight pipes. If a malfunction is confirmed, NSE inspection staff typically direct the property owner to install an adequate on-site sewage system. Fines can be issued if the property owner does not comply.

*The OSSDS Regulations govern the installation of on-site sewage systems, and require certified individuals to design, select and install systems in Nova Scotia. **Landowners are responsible to maintain proper function and maintenance of their on-site sewage systems under the OSSDS Regulations.***

NSE has approached the Registry of Deeds in the past to discuss the recommendation of provincial legislation that would require the correction of straight pipes during a property transaction, but the recommendation was not supported due to the potential impact on the sale of properties.