

# What are Gray Water Systems? – HB 259

There are different types of wastewater generated by a home. However, according to traditional sanitation practices (and current Montana law), all wastewater is treated the same. Similar laws exist in many other states, including some with a similar climate to Montana. These states include Arizona, Utah, California, Colorado, New Mexico, New York, Massachusetts, Texas, and Washington.

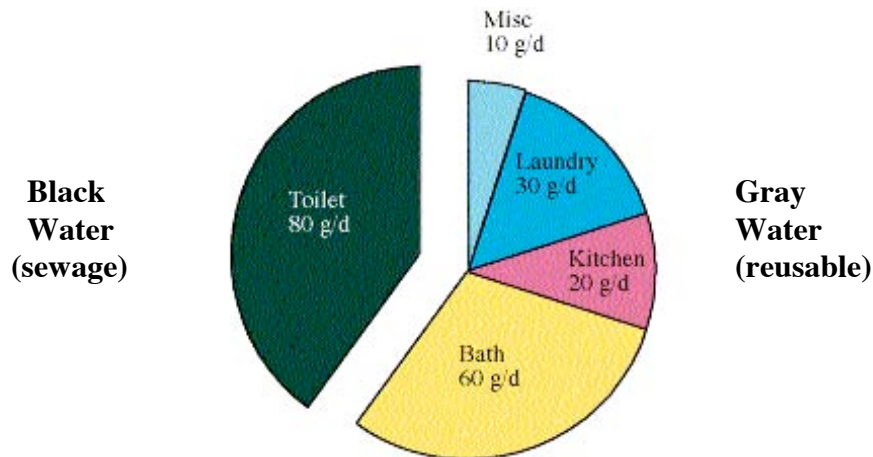
*Black water*, or water from toilets, is sewage that must be dealt with through the water treatment system.

*Gray water*, is washwater from laundry, sinks, and bathtubs. The “pollutants” in this waste, phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen, are excellent sources of nutrition for plants. For this reason, Gray Water makes excellent irrigation water due to these nutrients.

## Why Use a Gray Water System?

Gray Water makes up 50-80% of a home’s wastewater. Gray Water systems allow a homeowner to reuse this water, reducing the amount of clean drinking water used. Gray Water is also better than clean water for irrigation, due to the chemicals present. The primary use of a gray water-reuse system is lawn irrigation.

Average Household Use (gallons per day)



Graph from [www.greywater.com](http://www.greywater.com)

## What this bill does:

- Update Montana law to conform to the International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- Allow Homeowners to install gray water Systems
- Sets basic guidelines to ensure that gray water is used in a safe manner
- Allows the Department of Environmental Quality to make rules ensuring the safe use of gray water.
- Allow cities and counties to make additional regulations, in consideration of local concerns



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