Explanation:

This legislation will require private well testing in two scenarios: 1) before a home sale, and 2) by landlords leasing properties with private wells. This bill will proactively identify drinking water pollution across the state, so that action can be taken to clean it up.

The Private Well Testing Act will establish the first ever statewide drinking water protections for private well owners in New York. There are an estimated 800,000 private wells across the state, but many private well owners have never had their water tested. Over 2 million New Yorkers may be exposed to dangerous contamination when they turn on the tap and not even know it. Rockland County, Westchester County, and New Jersey have all enacted private well testing laws similar to this legislation, demonstrating that this testing program can offer critical data points. For example, in Rockland County 32% of private wells tested exceeded the state standard for harmful bacteria. Contaminated wells found across the state in Rockland County to Poestenkill, NY only further underscore the need for this legislation. When New Yorkers take a big financial leap like buying a home or signing a lease, they deserve to know that their water will be safe to drink.

This bill would be more health protective if it added emerging contaminants, such as PFAS and 1,4-dioxane, on the list of contaminants for testing. The bill would also be stronger if it appropriated clean water funds for private well testing and any necessary treatment technology.

Summary:

This bill amends the environmental conservation law, public health law, and real property law to establish a statewide private well testing program.