



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Water & Land
Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, PhD

Director, University of Hawai'i (UH) Sea Grant College Program,
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Thomas Giambelluca

Director, UH Water Resources Research Center

And

Michael Bruno, Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 180 – RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

Chairs Lowen and Ichiyama, Vice Chairs Cochran and Poepoe, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) and UH Water Resources Research Center strongly support HB 180. This bill would provide a critical expansion of capacity for the Department of Health by establishing and staffing a Cesspool Conversion section within the Wastewater Branch of the department. The Cesspool Conversion section would create a centralized resource to assist with the multifaceted nature of cesspool conversion and upgrades, including, financing, public outreach and education, providing consistent information to homeowners, managing grants, securing federal funding, and facilitating partnerships. Currently, these tasks are either not being completed or have been divided in a piecemeal way among entities without standardization or leadership. The Cesspool Conversion section at the Department of Health would be an invaluable resource to ensure the state meets its goals for cesspool conversion and upgrades.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.