



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 Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
House Committee on Water & Land
Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 9:05 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, PhD
Director, UH Water Resources Research Center

And

Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1892 – 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 and UH Water Resources Research Center **express support** for HB 1892, a comprehensive bill with the following key provisions:

- It sets deadlines for upgrading, converting, or connecting priority level 1 cesspools by 1/1/2035 and priority level 2 cesspools by 1/1/2045, advancing the previous deadline of 1/1/2050.
- It allocates funds to implement the cesspool compliance pilot grant project established under Act 153, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022.
- It introduces an income tax credit aimed at offsetting expenses related to upgrading or converting a qualified cesspool to a director of health-approved wastewater system or connecting it to a sewerage system.

The Cesspool Conversion Working Group has highlighted that most cesspool owners face financial constraints hindering the upgrade to advanced wastewater treatment systems. Eliminating cesspools promptly is crucial for human and environmental health, necessitating various financial assistance mechanisms for homeowners.

We support a swifter transition and recognize the need for financial support in doing so. While the inclusion of an income tax credit for cesspool transition is crucial, there remains a need to explore additional financial aid options such as subsidies or grants to alleviate the financial burden on homeowners.

Thank you for considering our testimony on this important measure.