



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**  
**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII**

Legislative Testimony  
Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.

By

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And

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And

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HB 2743 HD1 – RELATING TO WASTEWATER

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) and UH Water Resources Research Center **support HB 2743 HD1.**

This legislation mandates each county to develop and maintain a wastewater management plan with specific requirements. It provides the Director of Health with the authority to exempt counties with existing plans meeting certain criteria. Counties are tasked with identifying priority areas for expanding or constructing centralized treatment systems to eliminate cesspools by 1/1/2050, designating them as sewer improvement districts. Starting 7/1/2025, counties can assess a monthly cesspool pollution fee on properties with cesspools, utilizing revenues for various mitigation activities, including sewer system expansion and grants/loans to property owners. The legislation acknowledges that the appropriation exceeds the state's general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025 and makes appropriations accordingly.

The transition away from cesspools signifies Hawai'i's dedication to public health, recognizing the close connection between residents' well-being and effective wastewater management to ensure safety. Moving from cesspools to advanced wastewater treatment methods safeguards Hawai'i's natural resources and upholds the state's reputation as a global leader in sustainable environmental practices. This transition demonstrates Hawai'i's commitment to meeting and surpassing water quality standards set by regulatory bodies, showcasing proactive efforts to enhance environmental quality for residents' benefit.

Because this bill adds responsibilities for the Department of Health related to the management and oversight of county programs, our departments encourage the legislature's support of capacity increases at the Department of Health, specifically within the Wastewater Branch, so that they can effectuate their growing responsibilities related to cesspool conversion.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.