



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 3:05 p.m.

By
Darren T. Lerner, Director
Hawai'i Sea Grant
and
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Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2379 – RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Kidani, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program strongly supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved Supplemental Budget.

Previous research and a review of other state efforts to convert cesspools and outdated onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) by the Environmental Protection Agency highlight that education and outreach, supported by a neutral, non-regulatory entity is a major component of successful programs for conversion of OWTS. Members of the Cesspool Conversion Working Group (CCWG) established by the State of Hawai'i and led by the State of Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) have recognized that robust public education and outreach efforts in the form of a systematic, statewide outreach engagement will be needed if the State of Hawai'i is to achieve its goal of converting an estimated 88,000 cesspools by 2050.

For more than 50 years, Hawai'i Sea Grant has demonstrated expertise working in communities across Hawai'i to provide unbiased science-based information to stakeholders and as such is well suited to perform the necessary needs assessment and to execute a statewide outreach program in cooperation and consultation with the DOH.

In discussion with staff from DOH, they also support this measure. They stated that they do not have the resources or staff to conduct such a program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 3:05 p.m.

By

Thomas Giambelluca, Director
Water Resources Research Center
and

Michael Bruno
Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2379 – RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Kidani, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) strongly supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved Supplemental Budget.

Upgrading the state's estimated 88,000 cesspools will require researching and developing onsite wastewater technologies tailored to Hawai'i's unique geology and hydrology. In general, onsite wastewater systems often have large upfront costs. System costs in Hawai'i vary widely based on the type of treatment and our geographic isolation. WRRC believes that identifying a suite of cost effective solutions will be paramount to assisting the state achieving its goal of converting all cesspools by 2050. WRRC's staff has expertise in several interdisciplinary fields including engineering, hydrology, economics, and geology and is committed to protecting and preserving the state's drinking water and groundwater resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.