



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
Thursday March 16, 2023 at 9:00 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

SB 777 SD2– 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 **support** SB 777 SD2. Because it is critical to both human and environmental health that the state's cesspools be eliminated as soon as possible, it is important that a multitude of mechanisms for financial assistance be created for homeowners.

This bill would provide financial relief to those who are upgrading their cesspools through a temporary income tax credit. This tax credit would offset some of the financial difficulties of cesspool conversion and upgrades. Its temporary nature will hopefully incentivize conversion to occur in the near-term, which benefits human and environmental health outcomes. Because this bill adds responsibilities for the Department of Health related to the certification of cesspools, collection and maintenance of expense records, and tracking the amount of credit each taxpayer may claim, our departments encourage the legislature's support of personnel capacity increases at the Department of Health so that they can effectuate their growing responsibilities related to cesspool conversion.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.