

April 14, 2023

TO: Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Senate Committees on  
Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and members of the Senate Committee on  
Agriculture and Environment  
RE: HCR208 - Requesting each county develop a comprehensive integrated  
wastewater management plan.

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a movement led by young locals who will create opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

On behalf of Housing Hawai'i's Future, **I write in support of HCR208.**

We believe that housing is a public good. As such, state and county governments are obligated to provide the public infrastructure which is fundamental to good housing development.

The counties should develop comprehensive wastewater management plans including plans for the provision of sewer and wastewater treatment systems where appropriate.

**Please support HCR208.**

Thank you,



Sterling Higa  
Executive Director  
Housing Hawai'i's Future

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To: The Honorable Chairs Glenn Wakai and Mike Gabbard, the Honorable Vice Chairs Brandon Elefante and Tim Richards, III, and Members of the Committees on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs and Agriculture and Environment

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

**Re: Hearing HCR208 HD1 REQUESTING EACH COUNTY TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN AND A FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO UPGRADE OR CONVERT CESSPOOLS WITHIN ITS RETRSOPECTIVE JURISDICTION BY 2050.**

Hearing: Friday April 14, 2023, 1:00 p.m., room 224

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Aloha Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Brandon Elefante and Tim Richards, III, and Members of the Committees on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs and Agriculture and Environment:

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

**The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition STRONGLY SUPPORTS concurrent resolution HCR208 HD1!**

Undertaking a massive infrastructure project, such as converting approximately eighty thousand cesspools by 2050, requires proper planning and administration across various stakeholders and governmental institutions, including those of the counties. Conversion programs take time and require concerted long-term efforts, planning, outreach, and adaptation. Requiring each county to identify its respective infrastructure requirements and financial strategy is an important first step toward successfully upgrading or converting cesspools as required by law.

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Accordingly, this concurrent resolution asks each county to develop a comprehensive integrated wastewater management plan and financial strategy, including where connections to centralized public and private treatment systems are planned, locations where individual treatment systems will be needed, and where smaller-scale cluster treatment systems may be utilized.

We thank the Committees for hearing this important measure! **Please pass HCR208 HD1!**

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

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April 14, 2023

1 p.m.

Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

**To: Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs**

**Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair**

**Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair**

**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment**

**Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair**

**Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**

**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: HCR208 HD1 — REQUESTING EACH COUNTY TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO UPGRADE, CONVERT, OR CONNECT CESSPOOLS LOCATED WITHIN ITS RESPECTIVE JURISDICTION BY 2050

***Comments Only***

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [HCR208 HD1](#), which would require each of Hawaii's counties to develop an integrated wastewater management plan and financial strategy to upgrade, convert, or connect cesspools in their jurisdictions by 2050.

This resolution is in response to the final report presented to the 2023 Legislature by the Cesspool Conversion Working Group. This report analyzed strategies to implement a 2017 law that called for all of Hawaii's 83,000 cesspools be upgraded or converted to a director-approved wastewater system or connected to a sewerage system by Jan. 1, 2050, excluding cesspools granted exemptions by the state director of health.

The Working Group noted that many properties in rural areas, especially on the neighbor islands, may not be in areas where existing county infrastructure allows for easy conversion and connection to sewer systems.

It also estimated that 97% of Hawaii homeowners with cesspools face a significant financial burden from the conversion costs, with the total costs to replace all cesspools ranging from \$880 million to \$5.3 billion. Even with a \$10,000 tax rebate from the state, 85% would still face a financial burden.<sup>1</sup>

Considering these difficulties and costs, this resolution aims to establish a framework for meeting the 2050 conversion deadline by asking the counties to identify their respective infrastructure requirements, including where connections to centralized public and private treatment systems might be planned, locations where individual treatment systems would be needed and where smaller-scale cluster treatment systems could be utilized.

In other words, this resolution will provide a guide for county lawmakers, the Legislature and other interested stakeholders regarding the financial feasibility of wastewater plans and possible cesspool conversion strategies.

It is highly likely that the strategies of the counties would differ from each other, but this would give them the opportunity to learn from each other and adopt more innovative, cost-effective approaches.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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<sup>1</sup> [“Cesspool Conversion Working Group Final Report to the Regular Session Legislature pursuant to Act 170 Session Laws Hawaii of 2019,”](#) Dec. 15, 2022, p. 43.



April 14, 2023

**The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair**

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

**The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair**

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**RE: House Concurrent Resolution 208, HD1**

**HEARING: Friday, April 14, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

Aloha Chair Wakai, Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Joint Committees:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i and its over 11,000 members. HAR **strongly supports** House Concurrent Resolution 208, HD1, requesting each county to develop a comprehensive integrated wastewater management plan and financial strategy to upgrade or connect cesspools located within its respective jurisdiction by 2050.

Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® supports the goal of protecting our drinking water, streams, ground water, and ocean resources. We recognize that cesspool conversion is important to preserve our environment. There are approximately 83,000 cesspools divided into three priorities<sup>1</sup> across the State (48,596 on Hawai'i Island; 14,300 on Kauai; 11,038 on Maui; 1,400 on Molokai; and 7,491 on O'ahu) with only 27 years to meet the state's mandate to convert all cesspools to a Director of Health approved wastewater system. To convert 83,000 cesspools by 2050, at least 3,000 cesspools would need to be converted per year. It is crucial that we properly plan and find ways to assist communities and homeowners as resources and manpower are limited, especially on the neighbor islands.

Affordability and financial planning are key. The Cesspool Conversion Working Group conducted an affordability analysis<sup>2</sup> for homeowners. Based on the analysis, **97% of homeowners would be financially burdened by cesspool conversion costs**. Equally concerning, even with a \$10,000 rebate 82% of homeowners would still be financially burdened. Most homeowners will not be able to afford to do this alone.

<sup>1</sup> University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program. *Hawai'i Cesspool Prioritization Tool*. <https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/cesspools-tool/>

<sup>2</sup> Cesspool Conversion Working Group. (2022). *Final Report to the 2023 Regular Session Legislature*. State of Hawai'i Department of Health. <https://health.hawaii.gov/opppd/files/2022/12/Act-170-SLH-2019-Nov-2022.pdf>



Undertaking such a massive infrastructure project will require proper planning across various stakeholders and government institutions, including state and local governments. This resolution is an important next step so that we may be able to determine which areas sewer can be built out or where other conversion options are possible as well as to identify funding mechanisms and develop financing strategies to assist with cesspool conversions.

We applaud the state's effort in taking the lead by requiring the counties to develop a comprehensive integrated wastewater management plan and financial strategy to help meet the goal of converting 83,000 cesspools by 2050.

For the foregoing reasons, Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® strongly supports this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HCR-208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/10/2023 5:19:11 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

The People of Hawaii Do not Want any of this!!!! We the people KNOW that Cess pools are not the Problem Wast water Plants are the Biggest Problem We have they are responsible for Tons of Raw Sewage that gets dumped into the waters of Hawaii .These dumps pollute the Beaches and the water ways around the Islands and they NEVER take Responsibility for any of it this also causes Diseases and Many Medical issues that they also refuse take Responsibility for./ The Government/ So no THANKS we do not want any of this and will not Comply. It is our Islands!!!!



**HCR-208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/10/2023 9:33:17 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support.

I hope HCR208 also includes upgrading sweage lines and sewage plants statewide.

The sweage plant on Hawai'i island in Hilo is in dangerous disrepair. There are sewage leaks into ocean every month from every sewage plant on Hawai'i island.

Notices saying from DOH not to swim in ocean because its dangerous to human health.

FIX SEWAGE LINES AND SEWAGE PLANTS STATEWISE FIRST.

**HCR-208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 8:39:41 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion K A Kapuniai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**THIS IS PRUDENT APPROACH TO A STATEWIDE CHALLENGE WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION.**

**Thank you, M Kapuniai**



April 13, 2023

In Support of **HCR208 HD1** Relating to Counties' Wastewater Master Plans  
House Committees on PSM / AEN  
Hearing on April 14, 1pm, Rm. 224

Aloha, Chairs Waikai & Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Elefante & Richards and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the non-profit WAI: Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations, I am writing in **support of HCR208 HD1**. This resolution will ask each county to submit to the Legislature a comprehensive, integrated wastewater management plan / report that addresses the county's wastewater management and financial needs. This will also clarify and confirm each county's plans for: 1. sewer extensions; 2. small cluster / package systems; and 3. individual wastewater systems (IWS). These reports will help homeowners with cesspools to know whether they will need to hook up to sewer or convert to a DOH-approved package system or IWS.

Hawaii has more than 83,000 cesspools across the state, discharging 52 million gallons of raw sewage each day into Hawaii's waters. That's similar to a massive sewage spill every day! The people of Hawaii need this law to make sure their wastewater systems aren't polluting the groundwater or nearby surface waters.

As a member of the State's Cesspool Conversion Working Group over the last four years, we believe the counties need to come up with clear and comprehensive wastewater management plans that offer guidance to county, state and federal agencies, as well as homeowners, wastewater engineers and contractors. This bill will also help the state and the counties in their efforts to access more State Revolving Funds (SRF) and forgivable loans from the EPA to assist individual homeowners.

WAI is dedicated to protecting our drinking water, groundwater and near-shore ecosystems by reducing sewage pollution from cesspools and failing septic systems. Our goal is to help find more innovative, affordable and eco-friendly solutions to wastewater management. Better sanitation systems reduce sewage pollution and make properties more valuable, while also protecting our groundwater, streams and the health of our coral reefs and coastal areas.

Hawaii is struggling with serious sewage pollution problems, and the state has a mandate to make sure all cesspools are converted in the next three decades. To do that, the counties will need to work more closely with the state to outline plans for exactly where future sewer lines will be constructed and to help come up with financial assistance plans to help homeowners with the costs of conversion. By completing their wastewater management plans, which are already in progress, the counties will be able to come up with ways to access county, state and federal funding to help homeowners with the financial burdens of converting their cesspools. Mahalo for your leadership on this issue and support of this bill.

Aloha,  
*Stuart Coleman*  
kStuart H. Coleman, Executive Director

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