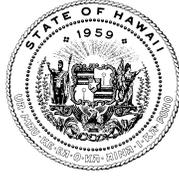


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o  
Hawaii'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina  
'o Hawaii'i*



KALI WATSON  
CHAIRPERSON, HHC  
*Ka Luna Ho'okele*

KATIE L. LAMBERT  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR  
*Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele*

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**  
*Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawaii'i*

P. O. BOX 1879  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 12, 2025 AT 1:00PM IN CR 225

**SB 1504, RELATING TO CESSPOOLS**

February 11, 2025

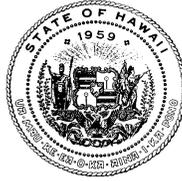
Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which 1) extends the sunset date of the Cesspool Compliance Pilot Grant Project to an unspecified date and 2) appropriates funds.

Approximately 2,500 cesspools exist on Hawaiian Home Lands and majority of which are ranked as priority level 1 or priority level 2 cesspools to be upgraded, converted, or connected to a sewerage system. DHHL understands the urgency to complete these conversions and connections before the year 2050. DHHL also understands that the Cesspool Compliance Pilot Grant Project will likely need more time beyond the sunset date to implement the plans and resources to meet the necessary deadlines before the year 2050.

DHHL supports funding to implement the Cesspool Compliance Pilot Grant Project that also serves lessees on Hawaiian Home Lands. DHHL understands that there is no simple, one method fits all ahupua'a (land division) solution toward addressing the cesspool conversion and wastewater needs of the State of Hawaii and we especially support funding to implement the cesspool compliance pilot grant program.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB1504  
RELATING TO CESSPOOLS.**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

February 12, 2025; 1:00 pm; Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be  
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the  
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governors executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department comments on this measure.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Management Division Wastewater Branch  
6 (EMD-WWB) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 The Department would be supportive of this proposed measure as long as either  
8 HB0749 or SB0675 are passed because three (3) additional full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE)  
9 positions within the Department’s WWB are required to implement this cesspool compliance  
10 pilot grant project. The duties and responsibilities of the 3.0 FTE positions would include, but  
11 are not limited to: developing program and outreach material before the launch of the program  
12 (e.g., revised application, revised website, revised information flyers); conducting outreach with  
13 the public before the launch of the program; intaking questions via phone and email and  
14 responding with answers; intaking of applications; reviewing applications, tax returns, property  
15 ownership documents and files and determining eligibility; issuing eligibility letters; issuing  
16 waiting list emails; issuing denial emails; managing progress of projects and keeping

1 applicants/grantees on schedule; intaking receipts, tax forms, and other financial documents;  
2 drafting, routing, and issuing grant agreements; reviewing receipts, licensed engineers, licensed  
3 contractor, licensed supply/equipment/materials companies; processing purchase orders for  
4 payments to the grantees.

5 **Offered Amendments:** None.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

February 12, 2025

**The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair**

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

**RE: Senate Bill 1504, Relating to Cesspools**

**HEARING: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

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 Hawaii and its over 10,000 members. HAR **supports** Senate Bill 1504, which extends the sunset date of the Cesspool Compliance Pilot Grant Project to an unspecified date. Appropriates funds.

Hawai'i 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 and to convert 83,000 cesspools by 2050, at least 3,192 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. Costs will vary greatly depending on resources, labor, permitting delays, property terrain, and other variables. According to the Cesspool Conversions Finance Research Report prepared for the Department of Health, "historical costs of cesspool upgrades to approved systems range widely from approximately \$9,000 to \$60,000 or more depending on the wastewater system capacity (based on bedroom count), technology, and location or site constraints."<sup>2</sup>

In 2022, the Legislature passed Act 153 to offer rebates of up to \$20,000 to help homeowners with the costs of conversion. Demand was so great that that \$5 million in grants ran out in just two weeks.<sup>3</sup> With the high demand of Act 153, HAR supports extending the sunset date and appropriating funds for the pilot grant project to help homeowners who are unable to afford converting without financial assistance.

<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> Carollo. (January 21, 2021). *Cesspool Conversion Finance Research Report*.  
<https://health.hawaii.gov/wastewater/files/2021/02/financefinalreportr.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Spectrum News Hawaii. (July 6, 2023). 83,000 Hawaii Homes Dispose of Sewage in Cesspools. Rising Sea Levels Will Make Them More of a Mess. [spectrumlocalnews.com/hi/hawaii/news/2023/07/06/83-000-hawaii-homes-dispose-of-sewage-in-cesspools--rising-sea-levels-will-make-them-more-of-a-mess](https://spectrumlocalnews.com/hi/hawaii/news/2023/07/06/83-000-hawaii-homes-dispose-of-sewage-in-cesspools--rising-sea-levels-will-make-them-more-of-a-mess)



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HAR would also note that the grant money received would be considered income and homeowners would be taxed on that amount.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**SB-1504**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:24:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
robin knox	Testifying for Water Quality Consulting, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The elimination of cesspools is essential to protect the quality of our drinking water, streams, groundwater, and ocean water. Homeowners need financial assistance. Please continue to make this funding available to them.

Robin S. Knox, QEP, President

Water Quality Consulting, Inc.

**LATE**

**SB-1504**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:57:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition **SUPPORTS** SB1504!

**Please pass this bill** and extend the sunset date of the Cesspool Compliance Pilot Grant Project! The need for cesspool upgrade grants mandate by 2050 will continue for the foreseeable future. Mahalo!

**SB-1504**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:30:57 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/12/2025 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Without incentives, such as the grants funded by SB1504, Hawaii residents will not meet the deadline to convert our cesspools to sanitary wastewater treatment. Everyone's health outlook is improved by assisting those who need help to convert their cesspools. Please pass SB1504.