

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

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2379
RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

SENATOR DONNA MERCADO KIM, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Hearing Date: 2/11/2020 Room Number: CR 229

Fiscal Implications: This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and personnel priorities.

Department Testimony: The Department supports this measure. Act 132, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018 established a Cesspool Conversion Working Group (CCWG) that is administered by the Department, to develop a long-range, comprehensive plan for cesspool conversion statewide of all cesspools by 2050. Outreach and education is an important part of implementation of the plan. The Department supports the outreach program that is being proposed by the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program. The measure also includes the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to conduct research on wastewater system technologies to determine the most cost-effective way to upgrade cesspools in the State and reduce the impact of cesspools on drinking water and groundwater resources. The Department supports this research because the results could potentially save cesspool owners thousands of dollars when converting or upgrading their cesspools.

Offered Amendments: None.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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
Michael Bruno
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Previous research and a review of other state efforts to convert cesspools and outdated onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) by the Environmental Protection Agency highlight that education and outreach, supported by a neutral, non-regulatory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.



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
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

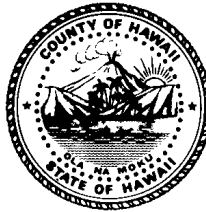
Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Kidani, and members of the committees:

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.

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

February 5, 2020

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SB 2379, RELATING TO CESSPOOLS
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
3:05 p.m.
Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Kim, and Members of the Committees:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2379, relating to cesspools. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council, and Chair of the Hawai'i County Council Public Safety Committee.

The purpose of this measure is commission a comprehensive statewide outreach program by UH Sea Grant College program that provides science-based information, and understanding of sewage contamination sources in nearshore marine areas. The program will also increase understanding of sewage capacity needs and informs stakeholders of appropriate solutions that support converting all cesspools in the State by 2050. Public health and the quality of drinking water, streams, ground waters, marine areas, and the ocean is being harmed by water pollution of cesspools. By supporting this program potential solutions to inform cesspool conversion has an educational benefit as it will research the finance, technology, and knowledge gaps of sewage capacity needs.

For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Agriculture and Environment, and the Committee on Higher Education to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

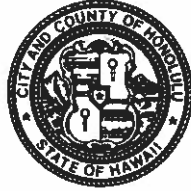
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Villegas".

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

1000 ULUOHIA STREET, SUITE 308, KAPOLEI, HAWAII 96707
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KIRK CALDWELL
MAYOR



LORI M.K. KAHIKINA, P.E.
DIRECTOR

TIMOTHY A. HOUGHTON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ROSS S. TANIMOTO, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

IN REPLY REFER TO:
WAS 20-57

February 7, 2020

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Committee on Higher Education
Senate
State Capitol, Room 220
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair Kim, Vice-Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Kidani, and
Members of the Committees on Agriculture & Environment, and Higher Education:

SUBJECT: SB 2379
Relating to Cesspools

The Department of Environmental Services (ENV) of the City and County of
Honolulu supports SB 2379.

In consideration of Act 125 requiring the replacement of all cesspools in Hawaii
by 2050, ENV recognizes the need for comprehensive solutions for achieving that goal.
SB 2379 appears to be a step in the right direction by proposing a statewide outreach
program to provide information on the environmental and marine impacts of cesspools,
conduct stakeholder engagement to identify physical, practical and financial issues
related to converting cesspools, and recommending viable solutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori M.K. Kahikina", is written over a horizontal line.

Lori M.K. Kahikina, P.E.
Director



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 — 3:05 p.m. — Room 229

UluPono Initiative supports SB 2379, Relating to Cesspools.

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair Kim, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Amy Hennessey, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs at UluPono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve our community's quality of life by creating more locally produced food; increasing affordable clean renewable energy and transportation options; and better managing waste and fresh water resources.

UluPono supports SB 2379, which requires the Sea Grant College Program, with the Department of Health, to develop and conduct a 2-year comprehensive statewide outreach program that provides science-based information and understanding of sewage contamination sources in nearshore marine areas; increases understanding of sewage capacity needs; and informs all stakeholders of appropriate solutions for cesspool conversion. This bill also requires the Water Resources Research Center to research wastewater system technologies to determine the most cost-effective way to upgrade cesspools in Hawai'i and reduce their impact on drinking water and groundwater.

Hawai'i has over 88,000 cesspools island wide that discharge more than 53 million gallons of untreated sewage into the State's waters each day. This poses a major health and environmental risk to our drinking water, groundwater, streams, and shore waters. UluPono supports local community engagement statewide for sustainable waste management practices. Increasing awareness for cesspool conversions is important in moving the State toward environmentally-friendly solutions on waste management.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Amy Hennessey, APR
Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



Feb. 10, 2020

In Support of **SB2379** Relating to Cesspools
House Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection (EEP) and Health (HLT)
Feb. 11, 3:05pm, Room 229

Aloha, Chairs Gabbard & Kim, Vice Chairs Ruderman & Kidani and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the non-profit WAI: Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations, I am writing in **strong support of SB2379**. This bill would establish a 2-year statewide program with the Dept. Of Health (DOH) and the UH Sea Grant Program to do education and outreach about sewage contamination and the need to protect our groundwater, surface waters and coastal environment. The program would also conduct a stakeholder assessment to identify impediments to converting from cesspools to more efficient sanitation systems and then inform the Cesspool Conversion Working Group.

I serve on the Cesspool Conversion Working Group, and this bill would help us find better and more affordable solutions to our serious wastewater management problem. Hawaii has more than 88,000 cesspools across the state, and these substandard systems discharge 53 million gallons of raw sewage each day into Hawaii's waters. That's like a massive sewage spill every day! Although most of us don't see the effects, this sewage pollution poses serious risks to water quality, human health and the resilience of our coral reefs.

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

This bill will help DOH to help fund an Outreach Program with UH Sea Grant to educate homeowners about the environmental and health threats posed by sewage pollution from cesspools, while also collecting information from these owners about their needs and offering them more innovative solutions. The mandate to convert all cesspools is 2050, but with 30-year mortgages, we need to start testing new solutions now, especially in high-priority areas like Kahalu'u and Upcountry Maui. This bill will make it easier to do that and provide critical information for the Cesspool Conversion Working Group to help us in educating the public and selecting the best new sanitation technologies for the state.

Mahalo for your leadership on this issue and consideration of this bill. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Aloha,
Stuart Coleman
Stuart H. Coleman

WAI: Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations * 2927 Hibiscus Pl. * Honolulu, HI 96815
808-381-6220 * stuart@waicleanwater.org * www.WaiCleanWater.org

SB-2379

Submitted on: 2/8/2020 12:54:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2020 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support SB2379 to protect Hawaii's fragile marine ecosystem.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Andrea Quinn

Kihei