

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0285
RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**

SENATOR DONNA MERCADO KIM, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Hearing Date: 2/14/2023

Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and
3 personnel priorities. The measure establishes two full-time equivalent (2 FTE) positions within
4 the Department's Wastewater Branch.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports this measure that involves establishing and
6 appropriating funds to implement a three-year demonstration pilot program within the University
7 of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to review, examine, and demonstrate new
8 wastewater systems. The Department recognizes that there is a need for researching and testing
9 new wastewater system options that may be affordable alternatives for cesspool conversions and
10 upgrades. The Department also supports the establishment of one full-time equivalent engineer
11 position and one full-time equivalent planner position within the Department's Wastewater
12 Branch to support the review and approval of individual wastewater system (IWS) applications.
13 The Department anticipates a significant increase in the number of IWS applications that will be
14 submitted as a result of the mandate to convert, upgrade or connect all cesspools in the State by
15 2050 pursuant to Act 125, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017. The Department recommends deleting
16 references to "waste management" and "cesspool systems" in the measure and replacing both
17 with the term "wastewater systems". A cesspool is considered a wastewater system and waste
18 management normally refers to the management of solid waste.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

1 **Offered Amendments:** The Department recommends the following amendments to the
2 measure. Additions appear as underlined, and deletions appear as bracketed strikeouts.

3 Page 6, line 7:

4 ... year new [~~waste management solution and cesspool~~]wastewater system ...

5 Page 6, line 10-11:

6 ... examine, demonstrate new wastewater [~~and cesspool~~]technology systems;
7 implement those technologies in [~~cesspool~~]wastewater system demonstration
8 projects; and establish ...

9 Page 7, line 5:

10 (1) Examine and demonstrate new wastewater [~~and cesspool~~]technology
11 systems, ...

12 Page 7, line 11:

13 (2) Administer not less than four [~~cesspool~~]wastewater system ...

14 Page 8, line 2:

15 ... research, and outcomes of each [~~cesspool~~]wastewater system ...

16 Page 8, line 12:

17 (1) Information on the new wastewater [~~and cesspool~~]technology ...

18 Page 9, line 6:

19 ... implement the new [~~waste management~~]wastewater [~~and cesspool~~]system ...
20



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 3:07 p.m.

By

Thomas Giambelluca

Director, UH Water Resources Research Center

And

Darren T. Lerner, PhD

Director, University of Hawai'i (UH) Sea Grant College Program,
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Michael Bruno, Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 285 – RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Richards and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center and UH Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) **strongly support** SB 285.

The State of Hawaii has shown its intention to improve water quality, mitigate drinking water risks, and join the other 49 states in addressing the known impacts of cesspools. However, Hawaii's 83,000 cesspool owners are faced with a paradox, the State's approved list of replacement options includes systems such as ATU's, which are effective at reducing nutrients but come with a high cost, or septic systems, which are less expensive but have been shown to have limited nutrient removal efficiency in Hawaii's coastal environments.

The lack of affordable, effective technology options is a major impediment to Hawaii's water quality improvement goals, and has the potential to result in a huge investment yielding little in return. This bill would leverage the University of Hawaii's extensive research expertise to create an innovative pilot program that would test the safety and efficiency of new and emerging on-site wastewater technologies, determine which are best suited for Hawaii's unique conditions, and ultimately support the Hawaii Department of Health in approving new, more effective and less costly technologies for large-scale implementation.

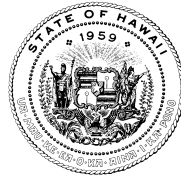
While we can not delay the process of replacing cesspools, a multi-pronged approach including policy changes, creating new financing options, and technology development is needed to successfully address this complex and challenging issue.

Additionally, we strongly support the appropriation of funds for two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) positions within the Hawaii Department of Health's Wastewater Branch, which is in critical need of expansion in their personnel capacity in order to support the statewide transition away from cesspools. We request that the bill language be changed from referencing the 2021 to the '2022 Hawai'i Cesspool Hazard Assessment & Prioritization Tool Report' (<https://health.hawaii.gov/wastewater/files/2022/11/prioritizationtoolreport.pdf>).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

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

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



IKAIKA ANDERSON
CHAIRMAN DESIGNATE, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. DUCATT
DEPUTY DESIGNATE TO THE
CHAIRMAN
Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele

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

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

**TESTIMONY OF IKAIKA ANDERSON, CHAIRMAN-DESIGNATE
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 14, 2023 AT 3:07PM IN CR 229**

SB 285, RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

February 14, 2023

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

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands supports this measure which establishes a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems; implement those technologies in demonstration projects in areas across the State that are identified as Priority Level 1 in the 2021 Hawaii Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool Report; and establishes a similar ranking system for prioritization levels for the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Ni'ihau. The measure also appropriates funds for FTE positions within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch to support the approval of individual wastewater systems applications.

Approximately 2,500 cesspools exist on Hawaiian Home Lands. Pursuant to Act 125 (SLH 2017), these cesspools are required to be converted to a septic system or aerobic treatment unit system or connected to a sewerage system before January 1, 2050.

DHHL supports the establishment of a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program because it will provide the opportunity for alternative, financially feasible, and effective wastewater technologies to be evaluated and published in reports for DHHL, current lessees residing on HHL, and potential beneficiaries to understand the challenges and financial costs of cesspool conversions and wastewater technologies.

The pilot program will also require that these technologies be implemented in areas across the State that are identified as Priority Level 1 in the 2021 Hawaii Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool Report, many of which are located on Hawaiian Home Lands. The department supports fully comprehensive data and new technology demonstrations that will include the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Niʻihau.

DHHL understands that there are approximately 88,000 cesspools statewide that will require cesspool conversion approvals. DHHL supports the appropriation of funds for FTE positions within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch to support the approval of individual wastewater systems applications due to the administrative demand that this legislative requirement places on DOH for the 88,000 cesspools statewide. DHHL is also aware that the State currently has a shortage of licensed engineers to execute the design plans and final construction inspections required by Act 125 (SLH 2017).

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 support this measure that will initiate the implementation of the diverse and feasible ways in which the requirements outlined in Act 125 (SLH 2017) can be completed.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

SB-285

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 12:49:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Bishop	Testifying for Friends of Hanauma Bay	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs Chairs and members,

Hawaii has over 80,000 cesspools that need to be upgraded in the near future for improved public health and to mitigate documented environmental impacts. Please pass this bill to demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems to help tackle this overwhelming cesspool upgrade mandate.

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop

President

Friends of Hanauma Bay



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

To: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Higher Education

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Re: **SB 285 – RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**
Hearing: Monday, February 13, 2023, 3:07 p.m., Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Position: **Strong support**

Aloha, Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education; and Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of SB 285. This measure establishes a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems; implements those technologies in demonstration projects in areas across the State that are identified as Priority Level 1 in the 2021 Hawaii Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool Report; and establishes a similar ranking system for prioritization levels for the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Niihau. It requires the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to submit reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds for the pilot program. It further appropriates funds for one full—time equivalent (1.0 FTE) engineer position and one full—time equivalent (1.0 FTE) planner position within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch to support approval of individual wastewater systems applications.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Platform plank on the environment provides that its members are to "protect and preserve Hawai'i's environment and achieve energy sustainability, advance measures to re-establish a healthy climate and environment for humans and fellow species, including actions to urgently address climate change, and work towards 100% renewable energy goals.

We believe that all people have the right to live in a clean, healthy and safe environment. We believe that the preservation of our natural environment and its ecological well-being is essential to ensuring a safe, healthy, bountiful life for future generations in Hawai'i. We support policies that create a more sustainable society. We support the restoration, preservation, and protection of native ecosystems.

We believe in the resource management principles outlined in the Public Trust doctrine of [Article XI, Section 1 of] the Hawai'i State Constitution." [OUR PLATFORM | DPH \(hawaiidemocrats.org\)](https://www.democrats.org/our-platform)

Hawaii currently has an official goal to replace all its cesspools with better sewage treatment systems that cause less harm to the local environment and public health by 2050; however, as many as 83,000 cesspools release about 53 million gallons of untreated sewage into the islands' soil, streams and nearshore waters daily making the 2050 deadline too late to prevent substantial harm.



February 13, 2023
Page 2

In the Report of the [Cesspool Conversion Working Group](#), nearly 14,000 of the worst Hawaii cesspools – the ones that would potentially cause the most damage based on their location – are to be removed by 2030; followed by more than 12,000 “priority two” cesspools to be removed by 2035; and the remaining “priority three” 55,000 cesspools are to be removed by the original 2050 deadline.

“There are no benefits to human health or the environment if homeowners wait or postpone conversion until closer to the 2050 ... deadline,” the 17-member task force of scientists, public health officials, private industry representatives, elected leaders and environmental advocates wrote in a new 1,182-page report to the Legislature. [Microsoft Word - Cesspool Conversion Plan Draft Final-copy-blue wave-FINAL use this one \(hawaii.gov\)](#)

Establishing a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems; implementing those technologies in demonstration projects in areas across the State that are identified as Priority Level 1 in the 2021 Hawaii Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool Report; and establishing a similar ranking system for prioritization levels for the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Niihau. It requires the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to submit reports to the Legislature and appropriating funds for the pilot program. In addition, appropriating funds for one full—time equivalent (1.0 FTE) engineer position and one full—time equivalent (1.0 FTE) planner position within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch to support approval of individual wastewater systems applications, all of which are consistent with the state and counties' duties under the Public Trust Doctrine under Article XI, Section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution, and the DPH Platform environmental plank to restore, preserve, and protect our native ecosystem.

Please support and pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

/s/ Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick
Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

SB-285

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:51:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Blickley	Testifying for Surfrider Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Surfrider Foundation strongly supports SB285 to establish a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems. Hawai'i has 88,000 cesspools that are discharging over 50 million gallons of untreated wastewater daily into our environment. We need to be exploring all of the options, opportunities, and technologies as possible to convert cesspools and support our local community in the process.



To: The Honorable Chairs Mike Gabbard and Donna Mercado Kim, the Honorable Vice Chairs Tim Richards, III, and Michelle Kidani, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Environmental Protection and Higher Education

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

Re: Hearing SB285 **RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**

Hearing: Tuesday February 14, 2023 3:07 p.m.

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Richards and Kidani, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Environmental Protection and Higher Education:

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

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 SB285!

Hawai'i has a public health problem with water pollution from cesspools. We have over 80,000 cesspools that discharge about 50 million gallons of raw sewage into our groundwater every day! Sea level rise will exacerbate the public health problems as it will cause some more cesspools to overflow onto the ground. The

recent report of the Legislature's appointed cesspool conversion working group recommended, among other things, that we upgrade the cesspools that cause the most pollution (Priority Level 1) by 2030 and provide additional resources to DOH.

This bill would establish a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems; implement those technologies in demonstration projects in areas across the State that are identified as Priority Level 1 in the 2021 Hawai'i Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool Report; and establish a similar ranking system for prioritization levels for the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Niihau.

HIROC strongly supports this plan! Implementation of new technologies is likely to be an important part of the solution to Hawaii's wastewater problem.

This bill would benefit the public health and water quality by improving the State's implementation of much-needed cesspool conversions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify!

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

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

12 February 2023

Today, as the president of the non-profit Hawaii Marine Education and Research Center which was created to support communities and our natural resources, I submit testimony in strong support of SB285 Establishes a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems; implement those technologies in demonstration projects in areas across the State. In addition, it is important that the funds for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) engineer position and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) planner position within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch to support approval of individual wastewater systems applications also be approved.

- There is now ample data showing both cesspools and septic tanks with leach fields are harmful to the environment, particularly where substrates are porous.
- There is now ample evidence showing both cesspools and septic tanks with leach fields are having detrimental impacts on our coastal ecosystems and coral reefs.
- The most economical and efficient solution is to connect current cesspools and septic tanks to semi-centralized wastewater treatment facilities but where and exactly how these systems are implemented needs to be planned out in detail.

Respectfully,



Robin Martin PhD
President, Hawaii Marine Education and Research Center

February 14, 2023

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: Senate Bill 285, Relating to Wastewater Systems

HEARING: Tuesday, February 15, 2023, at 3:07 p.m.

Aloha Chair Kim, 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** Senate Bill 285, which establishes a three-year New Waste Management Solution and Cesspool System Demonstration Pilot Program within the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to examine and demonstrate new wastewater and cesspool technology systems; implement those technologies in demonstration projects in areas across the State that are identified as Priority Level 1 in the 2021 Hawaii Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool Report; and establish a similar ranking system for prioritization levels for the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Niihau. Requires the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to submit reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds for the pilot program. Appropriates funds for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) engineer position and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) planner position within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch to support approval of individual wastewater systems applications.

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 priorities¹ 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.

Affordability and financial planning are key. The Cesspool Conversion Working Group conducted an affordability analysis for homeowners. Based on the analysis,

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

97%² 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. Costs to convert will vary greatly depending on resources, labor, permitting delays, property terrain, and other variables. Most homeowners will not be able to afford to do this alone. 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 and rural communities.

As such, new wastewater and cesspool technology systems would be an important solution to help the State reach the goal of converting 83,000 cesspools by 2050, especially for communities with limited infrastructure. We applaud the state for taking leadership on this matter through the establishment of this pilot program.

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

² 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>



Feb. 13, 2023

In Support of **SB285** Relating to Wastewater Systems
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment (AEN) and Higher Education (HRE)
Hearing on Feb. 14, 3:07pm, Rm. 229

Aloha, Chairs Gabbard & Kim, Vice-Chairs Richards & Kidani and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the non-profit WAI: Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations, I am writing in **support of SB285**. This bill would leverage the University of Hawai'i's extensive research expertise to create a pilot program to test the safety and efficiency of innovative on-site wastewater technologies. This program would provide valuable information on which technologies are best suited for Hawai'i's unique conditions. In addition, this bill would appropriate funds for 1.0 FTE engineer position and 1.0 FTE planner position within the Hawai'i's Department of Health Wastewater Branch to ultimately support the approval of new, more efficient, and less expensive technologies for large-scale implementation and cesspool conversion.

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 that this kind of pilot project for individual wastewater systems will be more efficient and affordable in the long run. The lack of affordable and effective technologies (nutrient & nitrogen reducing) is a major impediment to Hawai'i's water quality improvement goals.

WAI is an environmental non-profit 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 public health and valuable natural resources like groundwater, streams, 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. WAI is working with innovative sanitation companies from across the country and around the world to introduce more efficient and affordable alternatives for wastewater management. This bill provides funding for wastewater planning and management, incentivizes county-level action, and promotes partnerships between State and County wastewater management programs. I believe that SB285 is a crucial step in the right direction to solving Hawai'i's cesspool issue and sewage pollution problem. Mahalo for your leadership on this issue and support of this bill.

Aloha,

Stuart Coleman

Stuart H. Coleman, Executive Director

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

SB-285

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 1:37:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

support

SB-285

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:37:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

Appropriate fact finding through demonstration, in order to justify legislative action with a reasonable time to accomplish.

Thank you, M Kapuniai

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Higher Education and
Agriculture and Environment
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 3:07 p.m.
By
Christopher Shuler of Haiku-Pawela, HI

SB 285 – RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Members of the
Committees:

As an experienced water quality scientist with expertise in Hawaii and the Pacific, AND as a concerned citizen and user of our common wealth of drinking water and recreational waters, AND as a Hawaii homeowner who personally understands the challenges to affording and maintaining a home in Hawaii that are faced by myself and my peers, I **strongly support** SB 285.

This bill would create an innovative pilot program that would test the safety and efficiency of new and emerging on-site wastewater technologies, determine which are best suited for Hawaii's unique conditions, and ultimately support the Hawaii Department of Health in approving new, more effective and less costly technologies for large-scale implementation.

The lack of DoH approved, affordable, and effective technology options is a major impediment to Hawaii's homeowners who are faced with paying a huge out of pocket cost for a new system that may not even be much more effective in terms of positive impacts to the environment than their existing cesspool. The State's approved list of replacement options includes systems such as ATU's, which are effective at reducing nutrients but come at a cost of \$40,000-\$80,000, or septic systems, which are less expensive, at \$20,000 to \$40,000 but have been shown to have limited nutrient removal efficiency in Hawaii's coastal environments.

The need to develop, test, and permit emerging on-site wastewater technologies is clear, and this bill moves the needle in that direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Christopher Shuler, 02-13-2023

SB-285

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:52:07 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Hixon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. It is well-documented that the many cesspools in Hawaii leak waste into coastal waters, and nutrients from that waste fertilize seaweeds, allowing them to overgrow and smother corals. No coral = no reef = no fisheries, no ocean tourism, and no coastal protection. We must solve the cesspool issue before we lose our reefs. Please pass this bill. Mahalo.