

STATE OF HAWA'I OFFICE OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Statement of **MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Thursday, January 29, 2026, 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HB 1730

RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports HB 1730**, which establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group to assist the Department of Health in a review of the Department's administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools and in the development of proposed changes to make cesspool conversions more affordable. Requires report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds for positions and hiring of a consultant to assist the Wastewater Technical Advisory Group.

HB 1730 addresses the barrier that infrastructure capacity poses to the development of affordable housing. Current regulatory limits on Individual Wastewater Systems (IWS) are largely rooted in data from the 1990s and do not reflect the significant technological advancements in storage and treatment capacity achieved over the last thirty years. By establishing an advisory group to modernize these regulations, we can safely expand IWS limits to accommodate the greater infrastructure capacity and residential density required to meet Hawai'i's urgent housing needs. Furthermore, this measure aligns with the statewide efforts to accelerate cesspool conversions. By making these transitions more affordable and facilitating connections to higher-capacity systems, we create a more resilient infrastructure framework that supports sustainable growth. For these reasons, OPSD respectfully asks the committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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ENFORCEMENT
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STATE PARK

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Thursday, January 29, 2026
09:30 AM**

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 325

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1730
RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**

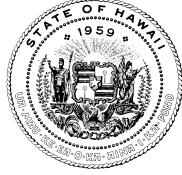
House Bill 1730 establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group to assist the Department of Health (DOH) in a review of its administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools and in the development of proposed changes to make cesspool conversions more affordable. It also requires a report to the Legislature and appropriates funds for positions and hiring of a consultant to assist the Wastewater Technical Advisory Group. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this bill.**

Hawai'i has over 83,000 cesspools that discharge 52 million gallons of untreated sewage into the groundwater every day. Sewage discharge can lead to decreased species diversity, increased nutrients leading to eutrophication, and reduction in coral cover. These effects on reefs are frequent, as sewage has been shown to travel quickly from land to sea. Thus, it is imperative to focus on effective management of wastewater to protect aquatic resources in Hawai'i. As it stands, DOH does not have adequate funding or capacity to carry out the number of cesspool conversions required to meet the goal of total cesspool conversions in the state by 2050, so this measure is important to provide DOH with those resources. In order to adequately protect aquatic resources from sewage pollution, this support for DOH is essential.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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*



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 Hawai'i
P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION
ON JANUARY 29, 2026 AT 9:30AM IN CR 325

HB 1730, RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

January 29, 2026

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

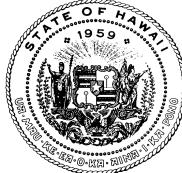
The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which 1) establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group to assist the Department of Health in a review of the Department's administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools and in the development of proposed changes to make cesspool conversion more affordable, 2) requires a report to the Legislature, and 3) appropriates funds for positions and hiring of a consultant to assist the Wastewater Technical Advisory Group.

DHHL appreciates the inclusion of one individual from DHHL to participate in the Wastewater Technical Advisory Group. 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 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. DHHL supports this measure that establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group that can review the Department of Health's administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools, in order to propose changes to make cesspool conversions more affordable without compromising water quality.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELA

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB1730
RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS.**

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 01/29/2026, 9:30 am, 325

- 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 offers comments and proposed amendments.

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

7 The Department supports the intent of this bill to convene a technical advisory group on
8 rules and practices for cesspools and wastewater systems, require the Department to propose
9 changes to Hawai'i Administrative Rules, Title 11, Chapter 62 (HAR 11-62) to make wastewater
10 systems and cesspool upgrades and conversions more affordable without compromising water
11 quality, and establish positions in the Department to focus on cesspool conversions and related
12 activities.

13 The Department understands the importance and urgency of addressing cesspool
14 conversion and the intertwined issues regarding individual wastewater systems (IWS).
15 According to Department records, 408 cesspools were converted in 2025 and 435 were
16 upgraded in 2024.

1 The Department is currently drafting updates to HAR 11-62 with the intent to undertake
2 significant revisions to better support IWS approval while continuing to protect public health
3 and the environment. These updates will primarily focus on IWS design requirements and
4 approval processes, with the goal of improving regulatory clarity and alignment with current
5 best practices. The Department will solicit community input on the HAR 11-62 revisions. We
6 also plan to convene a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group to continue the
7 work of the Cesspool Conversion Working Group established by Act 132, Session Laws of
8 Hawai'i 2018. The Department envisions that the Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working
9 Group would provide input and feedback on a number of key matters related to cesspool
10 conversion, including proposed amendments to HAR 11-62.

11 In addition, the Department is in the planning stages of proposing to expand the
12 Wastewater Branch to create a dedicated Cesspool Management Section and Quality and
13 Planning Support Staff unit. Adding these separate functions would create positions solely
14 dedicated to planning, organizing, and coordinating activities to close cesspools statewide,
15 including coordinating related policies and systems and assessing new technology. Additional
16 positions would also focus on program development, quality assurance, grant and contract
17 management, rulemaking, public outreach, and education, which would allow the Department
18 to provide additional resources to the public and improve customer experience as cesspool
19 conversion applications increase.

20 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully requests changing the "Wastewater
21 Techincal Advisory Group" to the "Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group" and
22 broadening its duties and members so that it may provide input and feedback to the
23 Department on a number of matters related to cesspool conversion. The following is a
24 suggested list of members:

25

- Director of Health or the director's designee
- Administrator of the State Historic Preservation Division or the administrator's designee

- 1 • Director of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands or the director's designee
- 2 • Licensed Consulting IWS Engineers working on Oahu sites
- 3 • Licensed Consulting IWS Engineers working on Maui sites
- 4 • Licensed Consulting IWS Engineers working on Kaua'i sites
- 5 • Licensed Consulting IWS Engineers working on Hawai'i Island sites
- 6 • Licensed IWS Contractors working on Oahu sites
- 7 • Licensed IWS Contractors working on Maui sites
- 8 • Licensed IWS Contractors working on Kaua'i sites
- 9 • Licensed IWS Contractors working on Hawai'i Island sites
- 10 • One (1) University of Hawai'i professor, who has knowledge and experience with wastewater issues in Hawai'i and nationally
- 11 • One (1) county government official selected by the Hawai'i State Association of Counties, who has knowledge and experience with wastewater issues in Hawai'i
- 12 • One (1) wastewater industry professional in Hawai'i, who has knowledge and experience in wastewater systems and individual wastewater systems technologies
- 13 • One (1) individual, who helped develop the Hawai'i cesspool prioritization tool
- 14 • One (1) individual from non-profit group, who has knowledge of wastewater issues in Hawai'i
- 15 • One (1) individual, who has knowledge of alternative wastewater technology systems in other states
- 16 • Member(s) of the House of Representatives or the member's designee
- 17 • Member(s) of the Senate or the member's designee

23 The Department also requests to change the permanent planner IV position provided in

24 the bill to one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent Engineer (Env.) V.

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



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM ‘ÖNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony
Hō‘ike Mana‘o I Mua O Ka ‘Aha‘olelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.

By

Darren Lerner, PhD, Director
Sea Grant College Program

School of Ocean and Earth Sciences and Technology
and

Tao Yan, PhD
Director, Water Resources Research Center
and
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

HB 1730 – RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program and Water Resources Research Center supports HB1730.

The upgrading of cesspools is a vital step towards mitigating the potential risks associated with groundwater contamination, as the adoption of advanced wastewater treatment methods reinforces Hawai‘i’s dedication to protecting its valuable water resources and minimizing ecological impact. The establishment of a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group will further the work accomplished by the state’s Cesspool Conversion Working Group, reported out in 2022. Enhancing the capacity within the Department of Health to administer cesspool conversions and review existing and new administrative rules is an important step towards meeting the state’s cesspool conversion goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



January 27, 2026

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Hawai'i State Legislature
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1730, Relating to Wastewater Systems
Hearing: Thursday, January 29, 2026, 9:30 AM CR 325 Via Videoconference

To: The Honorable Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the committee,

The Surfrider Foundation, Hawai'i region, is testifying in strong support of HB1730.
Without effective mechanisms to facilitate compliance with Section 342D-72, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, many homeowners face unnecessary cost, delay, and uncertainty when attempting to upgrade or convert cesspools. HB1730 addresses these barriers by strengthening the Department of Health's capacity to implement the cesspool compliance program through improved coordination, technical guidance, and dedicated staffing.

Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots activist network dedicated to protecting our oceans, waves, and beaches. Through our Blue Water Task Force (BWTF), a citizen-science water quality monitoring program on Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu, we regularly test more than 80 sites statewide for enterococcus, a fecal indicator bacteria. Many sites are located near high concentrations of cesspools, including Kāne'ohe Bay at Kahalu'u, where water quality frequently exceeds state public health standards.

HB1730 establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group to advise the Department of Health on cesspool and wastewater system rules and practices, and requires DOH to update administrative rules to make upgrades and conversions more affordable without compromising water quality. The bill also builds the staffing capacity needed to reduce delays, improve consistency, and provide clearer guidance to homeowners.

This measure is essential to translate Hawai'i's cesspool mandate into real-world implementation and protect public health and coastal ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB1730 on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's three Hawai'i chapters and members statewide.

Sincerely,

Hanna Lilley
Hawai'i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation

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Website: www.acechawaii.org

January 27, 2026

House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Hearing Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026, 9:30 a.m., Conf. Room 325

Honorable Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

**Subject: HB 1730, Relating to Stormwater Management Systems
Testimony in Support**

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members:

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Hawaii (ACECH) represents more than 68 member firms with over 2,000 employees throughout Hawaii. Our member firms play a vital role in Hawai'i by solving complex problems, driving innovation, and developing infrastructure that enhances safety and quality of life for individuals and communities.

ACECH supports this measure to establish a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group and a new branch in the Department of Health (DOH) to facilitate focused action on cesspool conversion in Hawai'i. The Legislature has enacted strong measures, including a 2050 deadline, to urge cesspool conversion. However, the pace of conversion has been hampered by the costs to individual property owners. We believe the Advisory Group proposed can help DOH evaluate solutions to these issues. Additional positions for DOH to spearhead these initiatives are also valuable.

Respectfully submitted,

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES OF HAWAII



Charles Jury, P.E.
President



TO: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy Perruso, Vice Chair

FROM: Lynn Miyahira representing Public Access to SunScreens (PASS) Coalition

DATE: Thursday, Jan 29, 2026

TIME: 9:30 AM

PLACE: Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Re: HB 1730

Position: SUPPORT

The [Public Access to SunScreens \(PASS\)](#) Coalition is a multi-stakeholder coalition composed of public health groups, dermatologists, sunscreen manufacturers, and leading advocates for skin cancer patients. We also support efforts that protect our coral reefs.

We support this measure.

Cesspools are a pressing issue in Hawaii that impacts our health, water quality, and coral reefs. With over 83,000 cesspools in the state, discharging about 53 million gallons of raw sewage every day, immediate action is needed to mitigate their negative impact. Untreated wastewater leaking from cesspools into nearshore waters can cause high levels of nitrogen in the water, which leads to algae blooms that suffocate and cover our coral reefs.

By convening a dedicated advisory group, HB1730 ensures that the Department of Health will benefit from the technical expertise and stakeholder input necessary to modernize its regulatory approach. The inclusion of funding for additional staff and a consultant is essential for the group to conduct a thorough review, analyze best practices, and develop actionable, cost-effective recommendations. This investment is expected to yield significant long-term savings by reducing the environmental remediation costs associated with contaminated groundwater and nearshore waters.

Affordability is a major barrier to cesspool conversion for many property owners. The bill's mandate to specifically address cost-reduction strategies is timely and pragmatic, as recent estimates suggest that the average cesspool conversion can cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per household. By targeting regulatory and administrative inefficiencies, the WTAG can help streamline permitting, encourage innovative

technologies, and identify funding mechanisms that lower the financial burden on homeowners.

HB1730 is needed now as it will accelerate progress toward the state's statutory goal of eliminating all cesspools by 2050. We urge the legislature to advance this measure and ensure robust implementation to protect Hawai'i's water resources, public health, and coastal economy.

Mahalo you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Lynn Miyahira
Public Access to SunScreens (PASS) Coalition



To: The Honorable Representative Nicole Lowen, Chair, the Honorable Amy Perruso, Vice Chair, and Members of the Energy and Environmental Protection Committee.

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

Re: Hearing HB1730 RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

Hearing: Thursday January 29, 2026 9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy and Environmental Protection Committee!

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** HB1730 and proposes friendly amendments!

Waste from cesspools is the largest water pollution problem in Hawai'i. There are over 80,000 cesspools that are dumping over 50 million gallons every day into Hawaii's groundwater, drinking waters, streams, and ocean. This pollution is making people sick with diseases such as gastroenteritis, skin rashes, eye irritations, and in some cases much more serious diseases. Cesspool pollution is harming the coral reefs that protect our very way of life here in Hawai'i —our recreation-based visitor economy, our fisheries and our shorelines.

The Legislature has recognized this urgent problem. By law (the mandate of section 342D-72, Hawaii Revised Statutes), all 80,000 plus cesspools must be upgraded to a system approved by the Department of Health by 2050. Additional action is needed now to protect

Hawai'i's public health and environment! We must not "kick the cesspool can down the road" any longer!

Unfortunately, cesspool upgrades can be very costly! We need to find ways to **make cesspool upgrades more affordable for homeowners without compromising water quality!**

Overseeing the upgrading of thousands of cesspools affordably is a huge task! The Department will in the coming years need additional staff for planning, comprehensive public education, and facilitating compliance and administration of thousands of cesspool upgrade grants, loans, and other financing. The Department will need to partner with counties, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to carry out its responsibilities.

I served as the Deputy Attorney General representing the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch from 2006 through 2020; I know its responsibilities and capacities very well. It is my opinion that, despite hard-working staff, **the existing DOH Wastewater Branch cannot take on these major additional tasks without assistance.**

The Department needs expert technical advice on how to facilitate new technologies and how best to revise its administrative rules and practices to **make cesspool upgrades more affordable without compromising water quality.**

This bill would provide the Department with that needed additional expert advice and begin to provide needed additional personnel who are dedicated to facilitating the conversion of cesspools within the State.

The bill should be amended in two ways:

- While a technical advisory group of experts on new technologies is necessary as provided in the bill, the group should be one piece of a larger cesspool conversion implementation group addressing the numerous upgrade challenges Hawai'i faces.
- Change the appropriation for two full-time equivalent employees to fund two FTE management positions for this large effort, such as an Engineer V and Program Specialist V as mentioned by the Department.

Please pass this bill with these amendments to protect public health and the environment by helping the Department to manage the huge cesspool upgrade effort!

Mahalo!

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

HAWAII OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



January 29, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT for HB1730 Relating to Wastewater Systems

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and esteemed members of the committee,

The Ocean Legislative Task Force—a coalition of more than 150 individuals across over 20 organizations statewide—strongly supports HB1730, which establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group (WTAG) to assist the Department of Health in reviewing and updating administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools. The bill's focus on making cesspool conversions more affordable directly addresses a critical environmental and public health challenge in Hawai'i, where over 83,000 cesspools discharge an estimated 53 million gallons of untreated sewage into the ground each day. This pollution threatens drinking water sources, coastal ecosystems, and public health, contributing to beach closures and coral reef degradation.

By convening a dedicated advisory group, HB1730 ensures that the Department of Health will benefit from the technical expertise and stakeholder input necessary to modernize its regulatory approach. The inclusion of funding for additional staff and a consultant is essential for the group to conduct a thorough review, analyze best practices, and develop actionable, cost-effective recommendations. This investment is expected to yield significant long-term savings by reducing the environmental remediation costs associated with contaminated groundwater and nearshore waters.

Affordability is a major barrier to cesspool conversion for many property owners. The bill's mandate to specifically address cost-reduction strategies is timely and pragmatic, as recent estimates suggest that the average cesspool conversion can cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per household. By targeting regulatory and administrative inefficiencies, the WTAG can help streamline permitting, encourage innovative technologies, and identify funding mechanisms that lower the financial burden on homeowners.

The Ocean Legislative Task Force believes that HB1730's collaborative, data-driven approach will accelerate progress toward the state's statutory goal of eliminating all cesspools by 2050. We urge the legislature to advance this measure and ensure robust implementation to protect Hawai'i's water resources, public health, and coastal economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting HB1730, Relating to Wastewater Systems
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
January 29, 2026 at 9:30am
Conference Room 325 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports HB1730, which establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group to assist the Department of Health (DOH) in a review of the Department's administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools and in the development of proposed changes to make cesspool conversions more affordable. This bill would also create two staff positions within DOH to expand capacity.

Science conducted by TNC and partners has shown that wastewater, particularly cesspools, are detrimental to the coral reefs that protect our coastlines and underpin our economy. With over 80,000 cesspools across the state, our aquatic ecosystems are being harmed by elevated amounts of organic nitrogen and phosphorus, pathogens, and other contaminants. These contaminants promote excess algal and bacterial growth and can pose a threat to human health. Our research in He'eaia, Maunalua, Olowalu, Hana and South Kohala has shown direct evidence of cesspool contamination in streams and coastal waters using a variety of bioindicators and chemical signatures.

In order to meet the State's 2050 mandate, the rate of cesspool conversions needs to increase substantially. With the current conversion rate of fewer than 400 conversions a year, any reduction of administrative obstacles would benefit rate acceleration. The Wastewater Technical Advisory Group, comprised of university researchers, county partners, wastewater professionals, nonprofit organizations, Native Hawaiian representatives, and alternative technology experts, and additional DOH staff positions would expand DOH's capacity to evaluate and update administrative rules and practices to lower costs without compromising water quality. Any recommended changes would still need to move through DOH's formal rulemaking process under Chapter 91, which includes public notice and opportunities for community input, ensuring that updates are transparent and community-informed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1730.

Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.

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January 26, 2026

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Hawai‘i State Legislature
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1730, Relating to Wastewater Systems
Hearing: Thursday, January 29, 2026, 9:30 AM CR 325 Via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Peruso, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the non-profit WAI: Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations (WAI) I am writing in **strong support** of HB1730.

WAI is an environmental non-profit dedicated to protecting our water resources by reducing sewage pollution from cesspools. Hawaii has more than 83,000 cesspools across the state, discharging 52 million gallons of raw sewage each day into Hawaii’s waters, contributing to groundwater contamination, harmful bacteria exposure, nutrient pollution, and coral reef degradation. WAI supports more innovative, affordable, and eco-friendly solutions to wastewater management.

Cesspool conversions can be costly, and we need to try to find ways to make upgrades more **affordable**. HB1730 establishes a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group to advise the Department of Health on cesspool and wastewater system rules and practices, and requires DOH to update administrative rules to make upgrades and conversions more affordable without compromising water quality. This bill also strengthens DOH’s staffing capacity, which is necessary to address delays, and speed up the rate of cesspool conversions needed to meet the State’s mandate to convert all cesspools by 2050 under Act 125 (2017).

Based on comments from the Department of Health and findings from the State’s Cesspool Conversion Working Group, WAI recommends broadening the scope of the proposed advisory group to support implementation planning in addition to rule review. Our recommendations include evolving the group into a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Group (CCIG) that helps carry forward the Working Group’s recommendations from the 2022 report to the legislature. As a member of the State’s Cesspool Conversion Working Group for four years (2018-2022), we identified the creation of a new Cesspool Section within DOH as one of the highest priorities in our Final Report, and the staffing positions funded by this bill are an important step in that direction.

WAI respectfully submits testimony in strong support of HB1730 and appreciates the Legislature’s continued leadership on addressing Hawai‘i’s wastewater pollution challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of this bill on behalf of Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations, and mahalo for your leadership on this important issue.

Aloha,

Stuart Coleman

Stuart H. Coleman, Executive Director



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1730

Relating to Wastewater Systems

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano, and I submit this testimony on behalf of Kingdom Pathways, a Wai'anae-based nonprofit working alongside families, students, and community partners to address environmental health and water quality challenges on O'ahu's Leeward Coast. We write in ***strong support of HB1730.***

Through our on-the-ground work, we regularly see how outdated wastewater systems affect daily life in our communities impacting drinking water sources, nearshore areas, and overall health. Many residents want to do the right thing but face significant hurdles navigating complex rules, unclear processes, and high costs associated with cesspool upgrades or conversion.

HB1730 is important because it focuses on problem-solving, not punishment. Establishing a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group creates an opportunity to bring practical expertise and real-world experience into rulemaking. This kind of coordination is essential if the state wants to move forward in a way that is both effective and fair.

For the communities we serve, affordability and clarity are key. When systems are too expensive or processes are difficult to understand, progress stalls. A technical advisory group can help identify ways to simplify permitting, improve guidance, and explore options that reduce financial strain especially for households already dealing with multiple environmental burdens.

Kingdom Pathways also supports the bill's emphasis on strengthening the Department of Health's capacity. ***When agencies are properly supported, they can respond to data, community concerns, and long-term planning needs. The attached Wastewater Conversation Mapping report ([https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/42225df9-5b97-4683-95c6-5a326984bfb5/Conversation%20Mapping%20HI%20Update%202025%20\(F3a\).pdf](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/42225df9-5b97-4683-95c6-5a326984bfb5/Conversation%20Mapping%20HI%20Update%202025%20(F3a).pdf)) reflects community priorities across Hawai'i, including the need for clearer communication, coordinated agency roles, and affordable options.***

HB1730 represents a thoughtful step toward a more coordinated and community-responsive approach to wastewater management in Hawai'i. We respectfully urge the committee to support this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

With Aloha,

Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano



LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

WAIHOME

WaiHome LLC

59-477 Hoalike Road

Haleiwa, HI, 96712

LATE

Statement of
Gregory Wong

Co-Founder and Engineer at WaiHome LLC
before the

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Thursday, January 29, 2026

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

In consideration of

HB1730

RELATING TO THE WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

To: Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee

WaiHome LLC **strongly supports** HB1730, which seeks to modernize Hawaii's wastewater regulations by establishing a Wastewater Technical Advisory Group and addressing the affordability of cesspool conversions. As a Hawaii-based startup funded by the NSF, NOAA, and HTDC, we believe this bill is a critical step toward achieving the state's 2050 mandate while supporting local innovation. We support this bill for the following reasons:

- **Regulatory Modernization:** The current administrative rules are over a decade old and frequently exclude feasible, affordable solutions. **This outdated regulatory framework stands as the primary barrier to successful commercialization** for our technology and others like it in Hawaii.
- **Focus on Affordability:** By identifying more affordable ways to improve public health, this bill directly supports the deployment of cost-effective technologies like those we are developing at WaiHome to protect our nearshore water quality.
- **Support for Innovation:** Providing the Department of Health with technical advisers and dedicated personnel will expedite the evaluation and approval of modern wastewater systems, moving beyond outdated "one-size-fits-all" approaches. **Understanding that solutions designed for the US mainland might not be successful in Hawaii's unique landscape is key.**
- **Protecting Hawaii's Reefs:** Improving the regulatory framework for wastewater is the most direct path to mitigating the impact of cesspools on our coastal ecosystems, a mission that aligns with our work and Hawaii's environmental goals.

I urge the committee to pass HB1730 to ensure Hawaii has the regulatory tools and technical expertise needed to solve our wastewater crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments,

Gregory Wong
Co-founder and Engineer
WaiHome LLC

HB-1730

Submitted on: 1/27/2026 9:55:21 AM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a marine biologist who has studied Hawaii's coral reefs since the 1970s, I have personally witnessed the decline of these immense natural resources. One of the main culprits has been poor coastal water quality that stimulates the growth of seaweeds that smother living coral, killing our reefs. Wastewater contains chemicals that fertilize seaweeds. I urge you to pass this bill.

HB-1730

Submitted on: 1/27/2026 12:40:37 PM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and committee members. I strongly support HB1730. Hawaii DOH's policies effectively currently limit cesspool conversion options for most homeowners to septic systems, which do almost nothing to protect the health of our reefs, are not practicable on many properties, are expensive, and require excessive maintenance. There are many superior systems which have been developed that might work well in Hawaii. With a looming conversion deadline and increasing threats to our reefs, time is of the essence to identify effective and affordable wastewater processing solutions, and make those available to homeowners. I urge you to approve HB1730 and push it forward with all due haste. Mahalo.

HB-1730

Submitted on: 1/27/2026 12:56:18 PM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betsy Scolnik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop ignoring this public heakth crisis and pass this. Stop pushing it off. Stop oretending it isn't critical

HB-1730

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 9:51:30 AM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael W Schwartz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a physician and live on a property that abuts the Moloa'a stream. I am deeply concerned about the heavy fecal contamination of the stream, and regularly warn children and families who play in the water where the stream meets Moloa'a Bay. I have experienced a mysterious bacterial skin infection after swimming in the bay last fall requiring a week of antibiotic therapy to treat it. Lastly, the growing problems that the stream presents are exacerbated by reduced stream flow, which in turn is caused at least in part by upstream diversion of water away from the stream -- a diversion system that has not been permitted by the State.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-1730

Submitted on: 1/29/2026 7:19:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.