

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

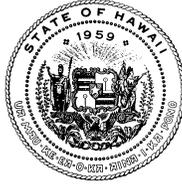
**Monday, March 2, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1730, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**

House Bill 1730, House Draft 1 proposes to establish a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working 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. It also proposes to require a report to the Legislature and to appropriate funds for positions and hiring of a consultant to assist the Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working 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.



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 HB1730 HD1
RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS.

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 03/02/2026, 10:00 am, 308

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 Governor’s executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department offers comments and proposed amendments.

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

7 The Department supports the intent of this bill to convene a Cesspool Conversion
8 Implementation Working Group on rules and practices for cesspools and wastewater systems,
9 require the Department to propose changes to Hawai’i Administrative Rules, Title 11, Chapter
10 62 (HAR 11-62) to make wastewater systems and cesspool upgrades and conversions more
11 affordable without compromising water quality, and establish positions in the Department to
12 focus on cesspool conversions and related 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 to make significant revisions
2 to better support IWS approval while continuing to protect public health and the environment.
3 These updates will primarily focus on IWS design requirements and approval processes, with
4 the goal of improving regulatory clarity and alignment with current best practices.

5 The Department has convened an informal Cesspool Conversion Implementation
6 Working Group to solicit wastewater stakeholder and community input on the HAR 11-62
7 revisions and to continue the work of the Cesspool Conversion Working Group established by
8 Act 132, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018. The Department envisions that the informal Cesspool
9 Conversion Implementation Working Group would provide input and feedback on a number of
10 key matters related to cesspool conversion, including proposed amendments to HAR 11-62.

11 SECTION 2(a) provides the description of the Cesspool Conversion Implementation
12 Working Group membership, however SECTION 2(a)(6) through SECTION 2(a)(13) does not
13 specify a quantity of members with the defined backgrounds. The Department requests
14 clarification on whether the Director has discretion to determine the maximum number of
15 invitations for Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group membership.

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

1 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully offers the following revisions to the
2 proposed measure. We have highlighted text where we are recommending replacement or
3 addition and bracketed and struck through the text where we are recommending deletion of
4 any amendments in this measure. All other amendments are unchanged.

5 SECTION 2, Page 6, line 6: “. . . members ~~[selected]~~invited by the director . . .”

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



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Monday, March 2, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, PhD
Director, Sea Grant College Program,
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology
and
Tao Yan, PhD
Director, Water Resources Research Center,
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
and
Vassilis L. Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1730 HD1 – RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports HB 1730 HD1.

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 Hawaii's dedication to protecting its valuable water resources and minimizing ecological impact. HB 1730 HD1 assists in these efforts by establishing a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group, which 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 through appropriated funds to hire additional support in administering cesspool conversions and reviewing existing and new administrative rules is an important step towards meeting the state's cesspool conversion goals. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is ready and willing to provide the required expertise as stipulated in Section 2a of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Monday, March 2, 2026, 10 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
HB 1730, HD 1
RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports HB 1730, HD 1**, which establishes a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working 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 a report to the Legislature; and appropriates funds for positions and hiring of a consultant to assist the Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group.

HB 1730, HD 1 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.

HAWAI'I OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



March 2, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature
House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT for HB1730, HD1, Relating to Wastewater Systems

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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, HD1, which establishes a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group 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 working group, HB1730 HD1 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, HD1'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.



House Committee on Finance

Testimony on HB1730 HD1

Relating to Wastewater Systems

March 2nd, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 308

Testimony of the Hawai'i Climate Change and Health Working Group

**In Support of HB1730 HD1
Relating to Wastewater Systems**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Climate Change and Health Working Group (CCHWG) **supports HB1730 HD1**, which establishes a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group to assist the Department of Health in reviewing administrative rules and practices regarding wastewater systems and cesspools and in developing proposed changes to make cesspool conversions more affordable. The measure also appropriates funds for dedicated Department of Health positions and consultant support to advance implementation.

Who We Are and Why This Matters

CCHWG is a cross-sector collaborative committed to strengthening Hawai'i's public health resiliency in response to climate change. Guided by the principles of equity, justice, and aloha, we work across disciplines and communities to research, communicate, and advocate for policies that reduce climate-related health risks, particularly for communities that are disproportionately burdened.

Cesspools Threaten Water Quality, Ecosystems, and Public Health

Hawai'i has more than 80,000 cesspools that discharge untreated wastewater into groundwater and nearshore waters each day, harming drinking water supplies, coral reefs, fisheries, and public health¹. Wastewater nutrient pollution contributes to algal blooms that smother coral reefs and degrade coastal ecosystems that protect shoreline communities and support local economies. Climate change, including sea level rise, extreme rainfall events, and increased flooding, heightens the risk of cesspool failure and contamination².

The Burden of Pollution and Compliance Is Not Equal

The burden of compliance and pollution impacts falls disproportionately on rural, coastal, and lower-income communities³. While state law requires cesspool conversion by 2050, current upgrade rates remain far below what is necessary to meet that mandate. By establishing a multidisciplinary working group to review existing administrative rules and identify cost-effective, feasible improvements without compromising water quality, HB1730 HD1 advances a more strategic and equitable pathway forward. Dedicated staffing and expert consultation will strengthen implementation capacity and help accelerate progress statewide.

A Proactive Investment in Climate and Community Health

This measure represents a proactive, preventative investment in Hawai'i's climate resilience and long-term health outcomes. Modernizing rules, improving coordination, and strengthening implementation infrastructure will protect water resources, coral reefs, and community health while reducing avoidable public costs in the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB1730 HD1.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kiefer, MD, MPH

The Climate Change and Health Working Group

¹[“Final Report to the 2023 Regular Session Legislature”](#), Cesspool Conversion Working Group, 2022

² [“Cesspools in Paradise”](#), Helene Raine, Sea Grant, University of Hawai'i, 2019

³ [“Hawai'i County Cesspool Conversion Task Force Report”](#), County of Hawai'i, 2025



A Community Dedicated to Saving Puakō Reef

Return the reef to its historic 70% coral coverage from its existing 7%.

www.Puako4reefs.org * [Puako for Reefs Facebook](#)

Story map of Puakō: [Wahi Pana -A Sacred Place](#)

HEARING FOR STATE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Monday, March 2, 2026 10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 308, State Capitol

TO: House Committee on Finance Chair, Chris Todd, and Vice-Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and all members

RE: House Bill 1730 HD1. Relating to Wastewater Systems.

Aloha Chair, Committee Members, and Honorable Legislators,

Puakō For Reefs is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting the reef near Puakō and building a scalable model to protect all Hawai'i coral reefs from wastewater pollution. We strongly support HB 1730, HD1, which establishes a cesspool conversion implementation working group.

The process of converting cesspools with either upgrades to better septic systems or, preferably, proper sewer systems will be a lengthy, complex, and challenging process.. And we all know that. AND we have to find a way to proceed.

We applaud the Legislature for this measure, to establish a working group, to work with the Department of Health with the many twists and turns these state-wide efforts will require.

This working group represents a necessary and critical step that the Legislature can take to accelerate cesspool replacement, protect coastal water quality, and preserve Hawai'i's reefs and public health.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership on this urgent matter.

Puakō for Reefs Board members and its many volunteers

Karen Anderson, Board Chair,

Stephanie Erickson, Board Treasurer,

Barbara Bell, Board Secretary, and

George Fry, Board member.

Statement of
Gregory Wong
Co-Founder and Engineer at WaiHome LLC
before the
House Committee on Finance
Monday, March 2nd, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB1730
RELATING TO THE WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

To: Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee

WaiHome LLC **strongly supports** HB1730 HD1, which seeks to modernize Hawaii's wastewater regulations by establishing a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working 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



TO: House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

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

DATE: Monday, March 2, 2026

TIME: 10:00 AM

PLACE: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Re: HB 1730, HD 1

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 Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group, the Department of Health will be able to benefit from technical expertise in our community to create a smooth regulatory process. The inclusion of funding for additional staff and a consultant is also essential.

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. By targeting regulatory and administrative inefficiencies, the Working Group can help streamline permitting, encourage innovative technologies, and identify funding mechanisms that lower the financial burden on homeowners.

HB1730 is necessary to 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



March 1, 2026

House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Legislature
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1730 HD1, Relating to Wastewater Systems
Hearing: Monday, March 2, 2026, 10:00 AM CR 308 Via Videoconference

To: The Honorable Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Surfrider Foundation, Hawai'i region, is testifying in strong support of HB1730 HD1. 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 of our monitoring sites are located near high concentrations of cesspools, including Kāne'ohe Bay at Kahalu'u, where water quality frequently exceeds state public health standards. These exceedances represent real risks to residents and visitors alike.

Hawai'i continues to face significant public health and environmental threats from the more than 83,000 cesspools that collectively discharge 52 million gallons of untreated sewage into groundwater and nearshore waters every day. This contamination threatens public health, degrades water quality, fuels harmful algal blooms that damages coral reefs- ecosystems that protect our shorelines, sustain fisheries, and support recreation and local economies. Without stronger implementation capacity and practical, affordable pathways for conversion, the 2050 mandate will remain aspirational rather than achievable.

HB1730 is about operationalizing Hawai'i's cesspool mandate. By determining most affordable solutions, modernizing administrative rules to reflect more cost effective options, and adding targeted personnel, this measure translates policy into much needed progress.

This bill is essential to accelerate cesspool conversions, protect public health, and restore confidence that Hawai'i can meet its clean water commitments.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1730 on behalf of Surfrider Foundation's three Hawai'i chapters and our members statewide.

Sincerely,

Hanna Lilley
Hawai'i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting HB1730 HD1, Relating to Wastewater Systems
Committee on Finance
March 2, 2026 at 10:00 am
Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports HB1730 HD1, which establishes a Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working 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. Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds for positions and hiring of a consultant to assist the Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working Group.

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, coral disease, and pose a threat to human health. Our research in He'eia, Maunaloa, 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.

Hawai'i urgently needs a practical path forward to meet the 2050 mandate for cesspool conversion. This bill attempts to map that path by establishing a cesspool conversion implementation working group with broad technical, industry, county, nonprofit, and academic representation to help the DOH identify affordable, effective solutions. Dedicated DOH staff and resources will strengthen the State's capacity to modernize outdated rules, streamline processes, and lower costs while maintaining water quality protections. These steps will help homeowners, counties, and the State make meaningful progress now toward reducing cesspool pollution and safeguarding our waters and communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1730 HD1.

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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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To: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair, the Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee.

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

Re: Hearing HB1730 HD1 RELATING TO WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Hearing: Monday March 2, 2026 10:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Finance 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 HD1!

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.

Please pass this bill 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)

HB-1730-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:24:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1730 HD1. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

HB-1730-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:26:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

Cesspool conversion is a big issue. This working group could develop some good ideas to make conversions affordable, so definitely worth doing. Mahalo!

Glen Kagamida, Hilo

HB-1730-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:45:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a resident of Hawaii County, and a homeowner in the Priority 1 zone for cesspool conversion, I am eager to convert my cesspool to a less polluting method of wastewater disposal. However I am not at all eager to convert it to a septic tank, which is expensive to install and maintain, would require destruction of my fruit trees to install, and would not reduce nutrient pollution to our nearshore waters. I believe that there are numerous technologies that are highly superior, but have not been evaluated or approved by the DOH. I strongly support HB1730 to assist the DOH in making more options available to residents who need to convert our cesspools. Mahalo.



March 02, 2026

House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Legislature
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1730, Relating to Wastewater Systems
Hearing: Monday, March 2nd, 2026, 10:00AM House Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 Cesspool Conversion Implementation Working 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).

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,

Jessica Kai Paisley,

Stuart H. Coleman, Executive Director

Jessica Kai Paisley, Program & Legal Specialist

HB-1730-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:05:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
An Vo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is An and I'm a public health student on O'ahu. I am a member of Climate Future Forum who shared this bill with me. Please support HB1730 HD1.

Mahalo,
An
Honolulu

HB-1730-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:13:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd and members of the FIN committee:

I'm writing in support of HB1730 HD1 so the state can move forward better with cesspool conversions.

Mahalo nui,

Paul Bernstein

Honolulu

HB-1730-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:45:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Seely	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To House Committee on Finance

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Relating to wastewater systems Rep Todd and members of the finance committee

I am a homeowner who is building an ohana home for a family caregiver and also a homeowner with a septic system which is required to be replaced by 2050.

I believe clean water is a right for us all and recycling our waste is critical for us all.

My issue is that we are using outdated systems that are extremely costly and damaging to our properties. Many smaller yet effective systems are in use around the world especially in island communities.

We are asking for reasonable options that are in compliance with standards to be approved for those of us facing these conversions.

I see that the University of Hawaii is studying these smaller and more efficient systems now. What can be done to move these into the approved options packages by the department of health.

I believe this should have been done years ago when the technology was developed in other areas of the world, but for sure we need this in Hawaii now.

Mahalo, Marilyn Seely

marseel@aol.com

