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Feb. 10, 2017

Strong Support for SB1180: Relating to Cesspools

Committee: Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health (CPH) / Agriculture & Environment (AEN)

Hearing: Feb. 10th, 1:15pm, Rm. 325

Dear Chairs Gabbard and Baker, Vice Chairs and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1180, the bill to amend the Cesspool Upgrade Tax Credit. I supported the original bill upgrade cesspools to better septic systems and aerobic treatment units (ATU). But since the passage of Act 120, there have only been a handful of cesspool upgrades.

Non-point source discharge from cesspools in Hawaii is a serious threat to our water quality, and these suggested amendments in SB1180 offer a sensible and overdue solution. With about 90,000 across the state, Hawaii has the highest number of cesspools in the country, and almost all of them pose a threat to water resources. These substandard wastewater systems leach untreated human waste, harmful pathogens and nutrient loads into nearby waters. Cesspools are a leading source of water pollution, and their effluent can contaminate drinking water sources, streams and oceans with disease-causing pathogens, algae-causing nutrients and other harmful substances.

Kauai has seen improvement after the replacement of cesspools at Kauai County beach parks and along the Hanalei River, where enterococcus counts at the beach at the Pavilion and estuary decreased approximately 56% between 2004 and 2013. Where sewer connections are not available, septic systems are a step forward in protecting public health and the environment. I hope they will make sure the replacements have some form of aerobic digestion.

Unfortunately, the \$10,000 tax credit does not cover the full cost of new septic systems, which can be as much as \$20,000. So I support the amendments to revise Act 120 to make the tax credit assignable and refundable, expand the criteria for cesspools and extend the sunset date to 12/31/2022. This will also establish a grant program similar to the solar rebate system that allows companies to package the credits and promote the program to cover most of the costs of installation.

Because cesspools pose serious public health and environmental problems, the proposed amendments are needed to make sure that Act 120 and the cesspool upgrade tax credits are successful. Mahalo for your consideration and leadership in dealing with these water quality issues.

Sincerely,

Matt Moore

Matthew Moore, M.Sc.
Environmental Scientist
ACSI

baker4 - Mary Kate

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 6:08 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Cc: kaily429@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1180 on Feb 10, 2017 13:15PM

SB1180

Submitted on: 2/9/2017

Testimony for CPH/AEN on Feb 10, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kaily Wakefield	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this bill. We need to encourage homeowners to updates cesspools to more sanitary systems for the health of the environment beachgoers.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Feb. 9, 2017

Strong Support for SB1180: Relating to Cesspools

Committee: Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health (CPH) / Agriculture & Environment (AEN)

Hearing: Feb. 10th, 8:30am, Rm. 325

Dear Chairs Gabbard and Baker, Vice Chairs and Committee Members,

As the Hawaii Manager of the Surfrider Foundation, I am writing in strong support of SB 1180, the bill to amend the Cesspool Upgrade Tax Credit. With more than 5000 activists and members across the state, the Hawaii Chapters of The Surfrider Foundation support the original bill upgrade cesspools to better septic systems and aerobic treatment units (ATU). But since the passage of Act 120, there have only been a handful of cesspool upgrades, and we are working with the Hawaii Dept. of Health (DOH) to improve their public outreach and community involvement.

Non-point source discharge from cesspools in Hawaii is a serious threat to our water quality, and these suggested amendments in SB1180 offer a sensible and overdue solution. With about 90,000 across the state, Hawaii has the highest number of cesspools in the country, and almost all of them pose a threat to water resources. These substandard wastewater systems leach untreated human waste, harmful pathogens and nutrient loads into nearby waters. Cesspools are a leading source of water pollution, and their effluent can contaminate drinking water sources, streams and oceans with disease-causing pathogens, algae-causing nutrients and other harmful substances.

In monitoring the water quality of North Shore beaches on Kauai, the Chapter has seen improvement after the replacement of cesspools at Kauai County beach parks and along the Hanalei River, where enterococcus counts at the beach at the Pavilion and estuary decreased approximately 56% between 2004 and 2013. Where sewer connections are not available, septic systems are a step forward in protecting public health and the environment. We helped pass Act 120 to give homeowners tax credits for upgrading their cesspools within 200 feet of the shoreline or waterways because they are the most dangerous. We hope they will make sure the replacements have some form of aerobic digestion.

Unfortunately, we recognize that the \$10,000 tax credit does not cover the full cost of new septic systems, which can be as much as \$20,000. So we support the amendments to revise Act 120 to make the tax credit assignable and refundable, expand the criteria for cesspools and extend the sunset date to 12/31/2022. This will also establish a grant program similar to the solar rebate system that allows companies to package the credits and promote the program to cover most of the costs of installation.

Because cesspools pose serious public health and environmental problems, the proposed amendments are needed to make sure that Act 120 and the cesspool upgrade tax credits are successful. Mahalo for your consideration and leadership in dealing with these water quality issues.

Sincerely,

Stuart Coleman



Stuart H. Coleman, Hawaii Manager