



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I  
MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Tuesday, March 27, 2018 11:05AM Conference Room 211

In **SUPPORT** of **SR 19** Relating to Cesspools

**LATE**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the WAM Committee,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i, a member of the Common Good Coalition, **supports SC 19**, urging the Hawai'i County to prioritize waste water infrastructure improvements to reduce the use of cesspools in its jurisdiction.

The Sierra Club of Hawai'i, dedicated to exploring, enjoying, and protecting these unique and beautiful islands we call home, have engaged in decades-long efforts to keep valuable public areas free of pollution and environmental contaminants. We support measures that seek to ensure public health and safety, concurrent with protecting our nearshore waters and finite freshwater resources.

*The concentration of cesspools is an urgent issue for many areas in Hawai'i.* The Department of Health's Environmental Management Division released a Report<sup>1</sup> to the legislature in December 2017 regarding cesspools and the prioritization for replacement across the islands (hereby referred to as "The Report"). The Report notes that Hawai'i has far more cesspools than any other state and is the last state in the nation to implement a ban. It emphasizes that cesspools pose significant threats to many areas throughout the islands, putting tens of millions of gallons of raw sewage into the environment each day, often contaminating groundwater and sometimes drinking water. Cesspools present health risks to residents and visitors who swim in contaminated waters and cause significant harm to streams and nearshore ecosystems, including damage to fragile coral reefs.

Decades of poor infrastructure planning and implementation have led to a dangerous concentration of cesspools many areas across Hawai'i, especially in areas designated as priority 1, 2, and 3. The Report identifies 14 critical areas that should receive priority for replacement, which is about half of the 88,000 cesspools that exist in the state.

*We understand the complexity of this issue and encourage collaborative efforts from the communities, counties, the Legislature, and private entities to solve it.* Solutions must be location- and situation-specific. Importantly, funding and financing mechanisms must be identified to achieve the replacements in an economically feasible way.

We must continue to take steps to protect our drinking water, public health, and the environment and encourage the Committee to pass SR19.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

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<https://health.hawaii.gov/opppd/files/2017/12/Act-125-HB1244-HD1-SD3-CD1-29th-Legislature-Cesspool-Report.pdf>

**LATE**

**SR-19**

Submitted on: 3/26/2018 11:59:58 AM  
Testimony for WAM on 3/27/2018 11:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Deborah Umiamaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments: