



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0551
RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

REPRESENTATIVE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: February 22, 2019

Room Number: CR 308

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Budget Request.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (Department) supports this measure. Act
4 132, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018, appropriated \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2018-2019 for
5 the Department to conduct research or gather technical assistance on other issues as identified by
6 the Cesspool Conversion Working Group (CCWP) in completing its comprehensive cesspool
7 conversion plan. To date, the CCWP has held four meetings on September 13, 2018,
8 October 9, 2018, November 15, 2018 and January 18, 2019. The CCWP is currently working on
9 the research and technical support contracts and recognizes that it would be challenging to
10 encumber the entire \$1,000,000 by the end of fiscal year 2018-2019. This would significantly
11 impact the CCWP because they would not be able to develop the comprehensive cesspool
12 conversion plan required under Act 132, SLH 2018. Allowing the unencumbered funds to lapse
13 on June 30, 2020 instead of June 30, 2019 would give the CCWP the additional time needed to
14 encumber the \$1,000,000 appropriation to fund the research and technical support contracts.

15 Staff from the University of Hawaii (UH) Water Resources Research Center (WRRC)
16 also supports this measure. They stated to the Department that they would need the additional
17 time to encumber the \$500,000 to conduct a comprehensive state study of sewage contamination
18 in nearshore marine areas.

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



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Friday, February 22, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.

By
Darren Lerner, Director
Water Resources Research Center
and
Michael Bruno
Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 551 – RELATING TO CESSPOOLS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) strongly supports this measure. Act 132, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH) 2018, appropriated \$500,000 for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the WRRC to conduct a comprehensive state study of sewage contamination in nearshore marine areas. The WRRC recognizes that it would be challenging to encumber the entire \$500,000 by the end of fiscal year 2018-2019. This would significantly impact the results of this work and the WRRC's ability to appropriately inform the Cesspool Conversion Working Group as it informs the comprehensive cesspool conversion plan required under Act 132, SLH 2018. Allowing the unencumbered funds to lapse on June 30, 2020 instead of June 30, 2019 would give the WRRC the additional time needed to encumber the funds for the research required.

In discussion with staff from the Department of Health (DOH), they also support this measure. They would need the additional time to encumber the \$1,000,000 to conduct research or gather technical assistance on other issues as identified by the Cesspool Conversion Working Group in completing its comprehensive cesspool conversion plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-551

Submitted on: 2/21/2019 10:47:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2019 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

Jan. 30, 2019

In Support of HB551 Relating to Cesspools
House Committee on Finance (FIN)
Feb. 22, 2019, 11:00am, Room 308

Aloha, Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

The Surfrider Foundation's Hawaii Chapters strongly support HB551 to expand the lapse date for funds appropriated to the University of Hawaii to conduct a statewide study of sewage contamination in our nearshore marine areas. Volunteer leaders from Surfrider five Hawaii Chapters have played an active role in passing bills to stop the construction of new cesspools, create tax incentives for homeowners to convert them and make plans to convert thousands of cesspools across Hawaii.

Non-point source discharge from cesspools in Hawaii is a serious threat to our water quality, and this bill extends the ongoing research being done by UH. With about 88,000 across the state, Hawaii has the highest number of cesspools in the country, and many pose a threat to water resources. It's estimated that these substandard wastewater systems leach 53 million gallons per day of 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.

As the Hawaii Regional Manager of Surfrider, I was invited to join and currently serve on the Hawaii Dept. of Health's (DOH) Cesspool Conversion Working Group. We have already begun the process of funding wastewater research through the UH Sea Grant Program, but these projects take time to put together. This bill will allow that important research to continue after the original lapse date.

Because cesspools pose serious public health and environmental problems, new research is needed to help assess how much untreated sewage is leaching out from old cesspools and septic systems, which release about 53 million into Hawaii's waters everyday. This bill will continue that research beyond the original lapse date. Mahalo for your consideration and leadership in dealing with these water quality and waste issues and help make Hawaii a leader in wastewater treatment.

Aloha,

Stuart Coleman

Stuart H. Coleman, Hawaii Manager