

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2106
RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 1/30/2020

Room Number: CR 329

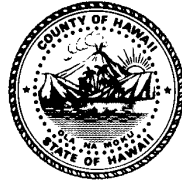
1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and
3 personnel priorities.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports this measure. Act 132, Session Laws of
5 Hawaii (SLH) 2018 established a Cesspool Conversion Working Group (CCWG) that is
6 administered by the Department, to develop a long-range, comprehensive plan for cesspool
7 conversion statewide of all cesspools by 2050. The CCWG is also responsible for evaluating
8 alternative wastewater equipment and technologies appropriate to the various areas where
9 cesspools are located that may better protect the environment at lower or comparable cost and
10 how the equipment or technologies can be incorporated as part of the long-term solution to
11 wastewater treatment issues. The Department believes that a pilot program that evaluates the
12 implementation and demonstration of economically feasible solutions for the conversion of
13 cesspools in the State will help the CCWG with meeting the objectives of Act 132 SLH 2018.
14 However, the Department may not be the best agency to develop and manage the pilot project.
15 The University of Hawaii's Water Resources Research Center (UH WRRC) may be the
16 appropriate agency that has the expertise and experience to develop the pilot program.

17 **Offered Amendments:** Amend bill by replacing the Department of Health with UH WRRC as
18 the agency that will establish and conduct the pilot program that evaluates the implementation

- 1 and demonstration of economically feasible solutions for the conversion of cesspools in the
- 2 State.
- 3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Harry Kim
Mayor



William A. Kucharski
Director

Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

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Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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January 28, 2020

Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Health
Hawai'i State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: HB 2106 Support (re Cesspool Demonstration Pilot Program)

Hearing: Thursday January 30, 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Dear Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee on Health:

The County of Hawai'i (COH) Department of Environmental Management believes that all counties would benefit greatly from these demonstration projects and therefore supports HB 2106.

HB 2106 appropriates \$4,000,000 to support four to six demonstration pilot cesspool conversions. HB 2106 limits these demonstration projects to priority level one areas in Maui County as defined in the Department of Health's December 2017 report to the legislature entitled "Relating to Cesspools and Prioritization for Replacement."

COH has the greatest number of cesspools in the state and as the youngest island has a unique geologic structure. COH believes that it would be appropriate to have HB 2106 require that at least one site include a Hawai'i island like location, specifically a lava based site without appreciable soil, or that HB 2106 be amended to allow a demonstration site to be located on COH.

Sincerely,

William A. Kucharski
Director

HB-2106

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 12:20:03 PM

Testimony for HLT on 1/30/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
pat gegen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Solutions are long overdue

LATE

Testimony for HB 2106

The need to establish a streamlined economical solution to small scale cesspool conversion is critical if Hawaii property owners with cesspools hope to comply with state and federal law. The current conversion process is complicated requiring the services of an engineer, permit application, all of which is very costly. In addition, the cost of materials, excavation, and labor results in total implementation costs that typically exceed \$35,000.

The complicated process alone creates obstacles and hurdles causing homeowners to throw up their hands in frustration. When faced with these challenges, owners simply kick the can down the road only to delay the inevitable. However, the high cost for conversion represents the largest and tallest hurdle for the vast majority of property owners. Many of them can't afford these costs and unless this single major impediment is addressed, the conversion process will never be achieved on a wide scale.

A pilot program that establishes streamlined solutions that in the end obtains approval from DOH is what is needed initially to provide our stakeholders and county governments a path forward. The established solutions must be "cookie-cutter" meaning that it should not require costly engineering services and must be classified as a pre-approved conversion process to expedite the construction permit process. Pre-approved, streamlined solutions not only eliminate the cost of engineering that represents 30% the cost of conversion, but it makes a frustrating process more tolerable easing the burden for property owners thereby reducing the barriers of progress.

Establishment of these solutions once documented and put in place, also paves the way forward providing options for the counties to execute, at their discretion, long term, wide scale plans to effect the conversion process expeditiously and economically. Placing the burden solely on homeowners to pay for the conversion process is not realistic. There will always be property owners who resist however easy and low cost solutions are created. Intervention by the County governments to implement mandatory programs will likely be the end game. This end game however cannot take place until the solutions are described above are in fact established and created.

By
Milton Choy
President
H2O Process Systems, LLC
(An Manufacturer's Representative of Water and Wastewater Treatment Technologies)