

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CESSPOOLS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the health of
2 Hawaii's people and quality of Hawaii's waters are being harmed
3 by pollution from cesspools. Hawaii has more than eighty
4 thousand cesspools that discharge about fifty million gallons of
5 wastewater into the State's groundwater every day. Cesspools
6 are antiquated, substandard systems that damage public health;
7 pollute drinking water; and lower water quality in streams,
8 ground waters, nearshore marine areas, and the ocean. Cesspool
9 pollution also harms public recreation and the precious coral
10 reefs on which Hawaii's economy, shoreline, fisheries, and
11 native species depend. The United States Geological Survey has
12 estimated that coral reefs in Hawaii provide flood protection
13 benefits to 6,800 people and \$836,000,000 annually in averted
14 damages to property and economic activity. To protect public
15 health, property, and the environment including coral reefs,
16 cesspools should be replaced by connecting homes to sewerage
17 systems or, in areas that are too remote to be feasibly



1 connected, upgraded either with individual on-site wastewater
2 disposal systems or cluster wastewater treatment systems.

3 The legislature recognizes that maintaining the cleanliness
4 of the State's waters is a matter of statewide concern that
5 falls under the legislature's obligation to enact laws pursuant
6 to article XI, section 7, of the Hawaii State Constitution.

7 The legislature further finds that the department of health
8 needs additional personnel to facilitate compliance with the
9 mandate of section 342D-72, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and to
10 administer thousands of cesspool upgrades in the coming years.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

12 (1) Create a new cesspool conversion section within the
13 department of health's wastewater branch that is
14 dedicated to facilitating the conversion of cesspools
15 within the State; and

16 (2) Establish and appropriate moneys for new positions
17 within the new cesspool conversion section.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 342D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
19 amended by adding a new section to part IV to be appropriately
20 designated and to read as follows:



1 "§342D- Wastewater branch; cesspool conversion section.

2 (a) There is established a cesspool conversion section within
3 the wastewater branch of the department, which shall:

4 (1) Manage and facilitate various state financing options
5 for the conversion of cesspools in the State;

6 (2) Develop and manage public outreach and education
7 regarding the conversion of cesspools;

8 (3) Inform cesspool owners of available options and
9 assistance for compliant conversions of cesspools;

10 (4) Manage any federal, state, or other available grants
11 to assist with the conversion of cesspools;

12 (5) Secure available federal funding that may be used to
13 assist in the conversion of cesspools; and

14 (6) Facilitate partnerships with counties, nongovernmental
15 organizations, and the private sector relating to the
16 department's responsibilities under this section.

17 (b) For the purposes of this section, "conversion of
18 cesspools" means the connection of a cesspool to a sewerage
19 system or upgrade or conversion of a cesspool to a director-
20 approved wastewater system."



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
4 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
5 year 2026-2027 to establish three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE)
6 permanent positions within the cesspool conversion section
7 established pursuant to section 342D- , Hawaii Revised
8 Statutes.

9 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
10 of health for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
13 provided that section 3 shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

14

INTRODUCED BY: Chris Gabbard



S.B. NO. 675

Report Title:

Department of Health; Wastewater Branch; Cesspool Conversion Section; Positions; Appropriation

Description:

Creates within the Department of Health's Wastewater Branch a Cesspool Conversion Section, which shall be responsible for facilitating the conversion of cesspools within the State. Establishes and appropriates funds for positions within the Cesspool Conversion Section.

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