



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1170 HD1
RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 12, 2019

Room Number: 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) to develop a
- 6 long-range, comprehensive plan for cesspool conversion statewide of all cesspools by 2050. The
- 7 CCWG is also responsible for evaluating alternative wastewater equipment and technologies
- 8 appropriate to the various areas where cesspools are located that may better protect the
- 9 environment at lower or comparable cost and how the equipment or technologies can be
- 10 incorporated as part of the long-term solution to wastewater treatment issues. The Department
- 11 believes that funding a pilot project that evaluates various available wastewater treatment
- 12 alternative technologies will assist the CCWP with meeting the objectives of Act 132 SLH 2018.

- 13 **Offered Amendments:** No amendments offered.

- 14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-1170-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2019 5:31:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kelly Rice	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

Hawaii is need of this enviromental protection~ the solutions are available! I support keeping our water clean and moving in a new, updated direction for waste management. I just completed a beach cleanup at Kahuku Point with the Surfrider Oahu Chapter; every action helps! Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Rice

Landscape Photographer



LATE

Feb. 11, 2019

In Support of HB1170 Relating to Cesspools
House Committee on Health (HLT)
Feb. 12, 2019, 9:00am, Room 329

Aloha, Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Committee:

The Surfrider Foundation's Hawaii Chapters strongly support HB1170 to establish and fund pilot projects to demonstrate new toilet and sewage treatment technologies and to expedite traditional permitting and regulation for the demonstration projects. 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 offers a sensible, overdue solution. 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. These substandard wastewater systems leach an estimated 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 need commitments from the State to help develop and fund pilot projects that use new technology to transform the way we process wastewater, and this bill will do just that. I was also fortunate to be invited to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Reinvented Toilet Expo in Beijing in Nov. of 2018, and I learned about many new technological advancements in wastewater treatment. This bill would help bring that technology to Hawaii and create demonstration projects to see which ones are the most effective.

Surfrider is part of the Hawaii Reef & Ocean Coalition (HIROC), and we believe this bill will reduce the number of cesspools and improve water quality by developing new technology that can transform the solid wastes into fuel and fertilizer (biochar that can be used as a soil amendment) and the wastewater into recycled water for farms, golf courses and other uses.

Because cesspools pose serious public health and environmental problems, new technology is needed to help Hawaii leapfrog over old cesspools and septic systems, which still leach many harmful pathogens and chemicals into our waters everyday. This bill will move us toward more efficient, affordable and eco-friendly technology that transforms waste and wastewater into useful products. 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

LATE

HB-1170-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 9:48:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 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

HB-1170-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 6:13:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support HB1170. Sewage technologies have come a long way in recent years in terms of being more environmentally-friendly.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Andrea Quinn

Kihei

LATE

HB-1170-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 8:29:18 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
NANCY JONES	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1170

WITH PROPOSED CHANGES

Aloha Honorable Committee Members:

We submit this testimony in support of HB 1170 – in its original form OR with amendments IF the Department of Health receives suitable funding to administer this program AND allows demonstration project beneficiaries to bypass the costly and time-consuming permit process. This bill is designed to assist the Cesspool Conversion Working Group by funding a new waste management solution pilot project to effectively: 1) demonstrate new toilet and sewage treatment technologies; and 2) expedite traditional permitting and regulation for the demonstration projects.

In his August 2012 article “Inventing a Toilet for the 21st Century,” philanthropist Bill Gates rightly noted (See: <http://www.impatientoptimists.org/en/Posts/2012/08/Inventing-a-Toilet-for-the-21st-Century>) that:

1) The flush toilets we use in the wealthy world are irrelevant, impractical and impossible for 40 percent of the global population, because they often don't have access to water, and sewers, electricity, and sewage treatment systems. Worldwide, there are 2.5 billion people without access to safe sanitation—including 1 billion people who still defecate out in the open and more than 1 billion others who must use pit latrines.

2) Also as of 2012, four of every 10 people still [didn't] have access to flush toilets proves that—it is a solution too expensive for much of the world. And in an era where water is becoming increasingly precious (Hawai'i is no exception), flush toilets that require 10 times more water than our daily drinking water requirement are no longer a smart or sustainable solution.

3) Further, we also have to work closely with governments, businesses, and communities to stimulate demand for better sanitation, encourage investment, and create supportive public policies that will allow these innovative solutions to succeed.

Indeed, before we returned home to farm in Wai`anae in 2012, my husband and I worked with various USAID programs worldwide and it was not uncommon for us to wake up in India (from 2005 to 2008) driving out to visit farmers and see people urinating on outdoor walls and defecating by the side of the road. In Turkmenistan in 2001, we spent over a month in a small northern town assisting WWII veteran farmers with creating small greenhouses to feed the town during the winter months. While there, the government had FINALLY begun to dig latrines for school children to use – instead of using a dedicated CLASSROOM (without ANY toilet facilities) in which children would urinate/defecate. Frankly speaking, given Hawai`i's inordinately-high homeless population and high incidence of vandalized City toilets at public parks, outdoor urination or defecation, certainly on O`ahu, should not surprise ANYONE reading this testimony.

The entire point of this bill is to, hopefully expeditiously—“review and demonstrate new toilet and sewage treatment technologies at different scales and in different locations” statewide AND “examine and implement a range of technologies from individual toilets to larger multi-unit systems, as well as examine options for community-scale solutions.” As a farmer and one located so close to a large, but well-organized houseless community encampment, Wai`anae and other O`ahu farmers along with perhaps Pu`uhonua O Wai`anae – at their new location – would serve as ideal points to demonstrate and study innovative toilet solutions. Toilets with composting features would prove especially valuable to farmers (who could apply that compost to trees/windbreaks and if deemed food-safe, their crops). Such toilets could also be tracked by Department of Health or Cesspool Working Group staff with relative ease in tandem with farmers, who would keep records on usage and compost generated. Otherwise, right now, the likely options for these communities are: 1) unregulated composting toilets; 2) outdoor latrines; 3) outdoor urination/defecation; or 4) porta-potties, which are (ideally) cleaned out once per week. Not many Hawaii farmers, if any, can afford to dedicate land for a leach field and then shell out over \$20,000 for outdated septic system design and installation costs.

For all of these reasons, and in an effort to “create a sanitation solution that will succeed” in replacing cesspool use here, we respectfully urge your committee to please PASS HB1170 out of our committee with these proposed changes:

- a) change the reporting requirement language to the 2021 session;
- b) include language that would involve Hawai`i's farming and houseless communities;
- c) change the effective date to no later than July 1, 2020 to allow further discussion; and
- d) include language to support expediting and implementing this demonstration project among potential users – like farmers statewide and with organized houseless communities (e.g. Pu`uhonua O Wai`anae).

Mahalo for the opportunity to present this testimony support this important measure that will benefit all of Hawai'i's citizens.