



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

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
Hearing Date: January 31, 2019                      Room Number: 325

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

14            The Department supports the overall concept of this measure, but has concerns with the  
15    language offered under SECTION 2.(c), which states that the department of health shall expedite  
16    demonstration projects conducted as part of the pilot project and waive any permits or  
17    regulations relating to the pilot project that the department deems necessary. Regulations and  
18    permits are in place to protect public health and the environment; therefore, the Department  
19    cannot support waiving any permits or regulations for the pilot project. The Department also has  
20    a concern regarding the submittal of a report on the status of the pilot project, including its

1 findings and recommendations, and any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than  
2 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session in 2020. The Department will not be  
3 able to complete the 2020 report due to time constraints. The Department, however, should be  
4 able to submit reports for the 2021 and 2022 legislative sessions.

5 **Offered Amendments:** Recommend revising SECTION 2.(c) to read, “The department of  
6 health shall expedite demonstration projects conducted as part of the pilot project.” The  
7 Department also recommends deleting 2020 from SECTION 4.

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



CORAL REEF ALLIANCE

**LATE**

To: House Representative Chair Nicole E. Lowen, Committee on EEP

Re: HB 1170 Relating to Environmental Protection  
Thursday, January 31, 2019  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania St.

From: Erica Perez- Program Manager (Hawai'i Island)  
[eperez@coral.org](mailto:eperez@coral.org)  
Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL)

Subject: I am testifying in Support with comment of HB 1170 Relating to Environmental Protection, establishes and funds a pilot project to demonstrate new toilet and sewage treatment technologies and to expedite traditional permitting and regulation for the demonstration projects.

I am testifying in Support of HB 1170 relating to environmental protection on behalf of the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL). CORAL is an international coral reef conservation organization that works with communities, businesses, and governments to save coral reefs. With field offices on Maui and Hawai'i Island, and projects throughout the Main Hawaiian Islands, CORAL uses a science-based approach to improve coastal water quality. Throughout the state, CORAL's programs mitigate land-based sources of pollution, such as wastewater discharge and stormwater runoff. CORAL is happy to be a member of the State Cesspool Working Group.

As Hawai'i develops a process to complete cesspool transition by 2050, it is critical that a thorough investigation into inventive ways of managing wastewater is conducted, which supports human and environmental health. A component of that investigation should consist of case studies where we can learn the benefits of specific alternatives. If homeowner support is present and the technology available to conduct a case study, results could inform the state process. Supporting HB 1170 could show our ability to solve the wastewater issue with flexible use of technology that treats to an adequate standard for community and environmental health.

In closing, CORAL Supports HB 1170 with comment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Erica Perez, Program Manager (Hawai'i Island), Coral Reef Alliance  
[eperez@coral.org](mailto:eperez@coral.org)



## O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP)

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair

Rep. Tina Wildberger, Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, January 31, 2019

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 325, State Capitol

RE: HB 1170 Relating to Environmental Protection

Aloha mai kakou Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Wildberger and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection:

The O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP) of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i (DPH) hereby submits its testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 1170 relating to Environmental Protection.**

HB 1170 establishes and funds a pilot project to demonstrate new toilet and sewage treatment technologies and to expedite traditional permitting and regulation for the demonstration projects.

Cesspools throughout the State of Hawai`i threaten drinking water supplies, coral reefs and the health of people who swim and surf in our island waters. They create a serious public safety issue, environmental problem and economic danger that is exacerbated by the effects of climate change. DPH supports septic tank upgrades and wastewater sewage systems where feasible by 2025. *Democratic Party of Hawai`i Platform (2018), p. 17, ln. 37-40.*

DPH encourages the responsible development of ocean resources and aquaculture to achieve sustainability in our State of our marine resources and ensure and improve the health of our reef and marine life. *Democratic Party of Hawai`i Platform (2018), p. 9, ln. 7-9.*

For the foregoing reasons, OCCLP supports HB 1170 and urges its passage out of the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection.

Mahalo nui loa  
Me ka `oia`i`o

/s/ *Melodie Aduja*

Melodie Aduja

Chair, O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of  
Hawai`i

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**HB-1170**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 7:30:55 AM

Testimony for EEP on 1/31/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rene Umberger	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-1170**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 1:50:13 PM

Testimony for EEP on 1/31/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-1170**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 10:53:40 AM

Testimony for EEP on 1/31/2019 8:30:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testing new toilet and wastewater treatment options with a pilot is prudent to address Hawaii's wastewater and cesspool issues. Please pass this bill.





**LATE**

Jan. 30, 2019

In Support of HB1170 Relating to Cesspools  
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection (EEP)  
January 31, 2019, 8:30am, Room 325

Aloha, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Wildberger, 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 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 it was there 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.

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

**HB-1170**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 7:27:59 PM

Testimony for EEP on 1/31/2019 8:30:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rafael Bergstom	Surfrider Foundation Oahu Chapter	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-1170**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 9:33:01 PM

Testimony for EEP on 1/31/2019 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Anny Barlow	Individual	Support	No

Comments: