HB 2088 HD1 – RELATING TO FINANCING

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai‘i Sea Grant) supports HB 2088 HD1. This legislation would help to enhance our community’s ability to convert cesspools to more advanced forms of wastewater treatment by creating a revolving loan fund under the administration of the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority. The proposed legislation would create new options for cesspool owners to finance qualifying improvements, including cesspool upgrades. This bill would enhance and expand the benefits and impacts of the Green Infrastructure Authority’s work and would enhance the state’s capacity to fulfill its mandate under Act 125, which requires the conversion of all cesspools by 2050.

Cesspools are significant contributors to nonpoint source pollution. The unabated flow of untreated waste has detrimental effects on human and environmental health. Cesspool pollution particularly impacts the wellbeing of coastal ecosystems facing numerous stressors, from shoreline development to global climate change. One of the primary impediments to cesspool conversion is the cost to individual families. Many of the owners of the state’s 88,000 cesspool owners are likely benefit from the availability of a new financing option to cover the cost of mandated conversion.

Hawai‘i Sea Grant supports HB 2088 HD1, which will help homeowners with the costs of replacing their cesspools and other essential upgrades.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.