



# **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

## **Legislative Testimony**

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 1:25 p.m.

By  
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Water Resources Research Center  
and  
Michael Bruno  
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### **SB 696 – RELATING TO CESSPOOLS**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) strongly supports this measure. In light of the fact that Hawai'i has the the largest concentration of coastal cesspools in the nation and understanding the importance of clean, healthy ocean waters to Hawai'i's people, communities and economy, Act 132, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018, appropriated \$500,000 for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the WRRC to conduct a comprehensive statewide study of sewage contamination in nearshore marine areas. The WRRC recognizes that this research and the information that WRRC would be able to provide the Cesspool Conversion Working Group (CCWG) established by Act 312, SLH 2018, and organized by the State of Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH ) would be significantly more robust and informative by the proposed appropriation of an additional \$500,000 and the provision of additional time to conduct these studies for fiscal year 2020-2021. In consideration of the additional funding in support of continued research, the proposed extension of the date for reporting to the legislature is also recognized as appropriate and is well appreciated.

From our discussions with the University of Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology and DOH, they also support this measure. DOH specifically stated that they would need the additional time and funding to conduct research or gather technical assistance on other issues as identified by the CCWG in completing its comprehensive cesspool conversion plan and they understand the need for additional funds as detailed in this bill to carry out our collective charge to fruition.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.