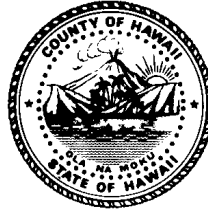


Harry Kim
Mayor



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March 13, 2020

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Dear Chairs Mercado and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Ruderman, and Committee Members:

RE: HB 2196, HD1 Relating to Water Quality

HB 2196, HD1 calls for research, education, and outreach, with respect to the impact of cesspools on Hawai'i's waters. While I applaud this initiative, I would like to ask for one amendment.

HB 2196, HD1 talks about "conducting a two-year, statewide, systematic outreach plan focused on providing education and communication about sewage contamination and the need for statewide conversion of cesspools to protect the coastal and nearshore environment" and "research on the most cost-effective way to upgrade cesspools in the State." My suggestion is that this research could be more objective if one of its tasks was to determine whether there was a scientific basis for forcing the expensive conversion of "all" cesspools.

I realize that present law requires such conversion. But objective research might reveal that geographic exceptions could be made without impacting waters and coral at all, thereby saving millions of dollars and a lot of heartache, with no countervailing negative consequences.

Since you are funding research anyway, wouldn't it make sense to be sure that the premise on which the research is based is scientifically sound?

I hope you will amend HB 2196, HD1 to make this simple but meaningful change. Alternatively, please include language in your Committee report that says the research may explore whether the universal requirement for conversion of cesspools should be modified to be truly cost effective.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,


Harry Kim
MAYOR