



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HAWAII BANS NEW CESSPOOLS AND OFFERS UPGRADE  
TAX CREDIT**

HONOLULU -- The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) announced today that Governor David Ige has signed new Wastewater System rules that would ban new cesspools statewide. Hawaii has been the only state in the country that allows new cesspools. New cesspools are currently allowed on most of Hawaii Island and parts of Maui and Molokai, but are banned in the rest of the State. Today's action banning new cesspools statewide would stop the addition of pollution from approximately 800 new cesspools per year.

Hawaii has about 88,000 cesspools, far more than any other state. Cesspools provide no treatment, and inject about 55 million gallons of raw sewage into Hawaii's groundwater every day, potentially spreading diseases and harming the quality of drinking water supplies and recreational waters.

The new rules also implement a 2015 law providing a tax credit of up to \$10,000 for cesspools upgraded to sewer or septic system during the next five years, limited to \$5 million or about 500 cesspool upgrades per year. Under the law, owners of cesspools located within 200 feet of the ocean, streams or marsh areas, or near drinking water sources can qualify for the tax credit. DOH will be issuing forms soon for taxpayers who want to apply for the credit. Taxpayers should first establish with a contractor that their

cesspool is in a location that qualifies for the credit and then keep records to show DOH and the Tax Department the amount spent on a qualifying upgrade.

The new administrative rules become effective ten days after filing with the Lieutenant Governor's Office.

Deputy Director of Environmental Health Keith Kawaoka applauded the passage of the rules, and said "Today's action protects public health and is a good first step toward eliminating water pollution from cesspools."

Details on DOH's proposal are available at <http://health.hawaii.gov/wastewater/>

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