

# CESSPOOLS IN HAWAII

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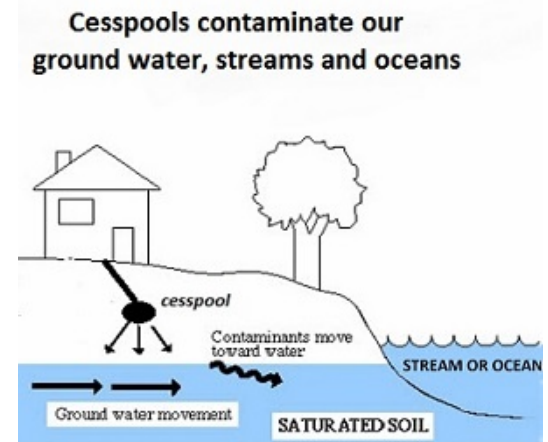
[health.hawaii.gov/wastewater/cesspools/](http://health.hawaii.gov/wastewater/cesspools/)

## Why is the Wastewater Branch proposing changes to Chapter 11-62 rules to phase out cesspools?

Cesspools are substandard systems. They don't treat wastewater, they merely dispose of it. Cesspools concentrate the wastewater in one location, often deep within the ground and in direct contact with groundwater, causing groundwater contamination. This groundwater flows into drinking water wells, streams and the ocean, harming public health and the environment, including beaches and coral reefs.

### What are cesspools?

- Cesspools are little more than holes in the ground that discharge raw, untreated human waste.
- Cesspools can contaminate ground water, drinking water sources, streams and oceans with disease-causing pathogens, algae-causing nutrients, and other harmful substances.
- Untreated wastewater from cesspools contains pathogens such as bacteria, protozoa and viruses that can cause gastroenteritis, Hepatitis A, conjunctivitis, leptospirosis, salmonellosis and cholera.



### How many cesspools do we have in Hawai'i?

- There are approximately **90,000** cesspools in the State, with nearly 50,000 located on the Big Island, almost 14,000 on Kauai, over 12,000 on Maui, over 11,000 on Oahu and over 1,400 on Molokai.
- Hawai'i is the only state in the US that still allows construction of new cesspools.
- Approximately 800 new cesspools are approved for construction in Hawai'i each year.

### How many cesspools pose a risk to our water resources and how do they impact our environment?

- There are **87,000** cesspools that pose a risk to our water resources.
- There are approximately 6,700 cesspools that are located within 200 feet of a perennial stream channel throughout the State. There are approximately 31,000 cesspools that are located within the perennial watersheds on the islands of Hawai'i, Kauai, Maui, and Molokai.
- Cesspools in Hawai'i release approximately **55 million gallons of untreated sewage** into the ground each day.
- Cesspools in Hawai'i release as much as 23,700 pounds of nitrogen and nearly 6,000 pounds of phosphorus into the ground each day each day, which can stimulate undesirable algae growth, degrade water quality, and impact coral reefs.