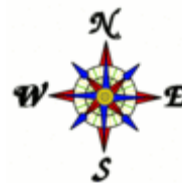


CSAW
Campaign to Safeguard America's Waters



Earth Island Institute



Responsible Cruising in Alaska

For Immediate Release: 3/20/09

CSAW and RCA Defend Alaska Cruise Ship Pollution Law Against HB-134

CSAW and RCA, sponsors of the Alaska Cruise Ship Ballot Initiative, have once again been called on to battle the powerful cruise industry lobby as it attempts to overturn components of Alaska's cruise ship pollution rules passed by popular vote in 2006.

Ever since DEC issued its 2008 General Permit for cruise ship discharges, the industry has claimed it is impossible to meet the State's Water Quality Standards (WQS) at the point of discharge. Industry publications have asserted the public "did not understand" what it was voting for, and the initiative resulted in "unintended consequences." Nothing could be further from the truth: the initiative clearly required a point of discharge application of WQS, i.e., no mixing zones (dilution-pollution zones) for cruise ships. HB-134 supporters claim to argue for using "good science," but the science is found in Alaska's WQS – not in a mixing zone, which is essentially a risk analysis based on engineering models.

According to Gershon Cohen, CSAW Director and initiative co-sponsor: "...the mixing zone ban is needed because the mobility of the ships makes it impossible to determine impact or enforce limits on ship pollution. Land-based outfalls can be posted and avoided by fishermen. Anyone harvesting fish or other aquatic life from Alaska waters used by cruise ships cannot know if their catch was inside the mixing zone when the ship released its wastewater, and might therefore be contaminated. Alaska fishermen market wild salmon on the purity of our waters; the cruise industry needs to respect the needs of our commercial and subsistence harvesters and do the best job possible."

Regarding the "impossibility" of meeting the rule, RCA President Chip Thoma issued the following statement: "Over the last month DEC has issued two detailed public documents (*DEC Cruise Ship Technology Workshop and Draft Feasibility Study* and *Water Division Staff's Status Report*) and held a day-long technology conference on this matter. Both documents and the technology conference fully supported the fact that although in some cases a technology may need to be adjusted to fit on a ship, the technologies to meet our WQS at point of discharge exist and can get the job done. According to DEC, many ships are already meeting the rules and more will likely be meeting them in the near future."

CSAW and RCA are on record in support of DEC's current position, which gives the cruise lines more time to fully comply. However, both organizations insist any further extension of the temporary waivers be conditioned on a guarantee that the exemption program is short-lived, and tied to a demonstration that each ship with a temporary waiver is working judiciously to comply in the shortest possible time frame.

For more information, contact Chip Thoma, RCA President @ 586-2117 or Gershon Cohen Ph.D., CSAW Project Director @ 766-3005.