

CSAW

Campaign to Safeguard America's Waters



Earth Island Institute

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Earth Island Institute Sponsors Ocean Ranger Bill in California

The Earth Island Institute (EII), working with State Senator Joe Simitian, is sponsoring a bill to protect California waters from cruise ship pollution and cruise ship passengers from crimes on the high seas. SB 1582 will establish the California Ocean Ranger program, placing independent officers with certifications in marine engineering and public safety on every cruise ship transiting California waters. The Ocean Rangers will perform three important tasks:

- Oversee wastewater discharge practices and the maintenance and operation of pollution control equipment. The cruise industry has been convicted for dumping, tampering with pollution control equipment, and falsifying logbooks. California must protect its coastal waters.
- Deter crime and ensure important criminal evidence is not destroyed or improperly handled. The incidence of serious crimes on cruise ships (thefts, rapes, assaults, and suspected homicides) has reached epidemic proportions.
- Coordinate with Homeland Security agencies to be a first line of defense against terrorism attacks in U.S. ports of call. Tens of thousands of foreign nationals have direct access to U.S. port cities every day via cruise ships, with minimal or no oversight.

A \$1 fee/berth/day will be assessed on each ship, which will be sufficient to pay for the Ocean Ranger program.

Ken Carver, President of the group International Cruise Victims (ICV) believes the time for independent safety officers on cruise ships has come: "The cruise industry has failed to adopt adequate measures to protect its passengers. In Congressional hearings in 2006 and 2007, International Cruise Victims called for independent monitors on all cruise ships. This legislation is a big step forward and is to be commended."

According to EII's Gershon Cohen, "Our first goal was to establish a cruise ship Ocean Ranger program in Alaska. That effort culminated in a successful statewide initiative passed by popular vote in 2006. This California legislation will take the next step towards establishing uniform monitoring programs for the entire west coast of North America; we must not allow cruise ships to simply dump their waste before getting to Alaska. We are honored to be working with Senator Joe Simitian on this important bill. Senator Simitian championed the zero-discharge rule for cruise ships in California three years ago, and recognizes the need for onboard Ocean Rangers to verify the industry's compliance with environmental laws and protect U.S. citizens."