

For Immediate Release

Responsible Cruising in Alaska

Contact: 766-3005, 586-8193

Alaska Cruise Ship Ballot Measure Wins Statewide Approval !!

With 99.3% of the vote tallied, Ballot Measure 2, the Cruise Ship Taxation and Regulation Initiative cruised to victory in the August 22nd statewide election.

Ballot Measure 2 was drafted three years ago after citizens were unable to get the Alaska Legislature to pass reasonable water pollution and taxation rules on the industry that brings nearly 1 million passengers plus crew to Alaska every summer. The new law will protect Alaska waters from cruise ship pollution, assess fair taxes on the industry, and protect local businesses from the unfair trade practices that have favored cruise line-controlled chain stores in Alaska's ports of call.

Gershon Cohen, co-drafter of the ballot measure, said there were two victories in Tuesday's election. "First, Alaska has made it clear to the cruise lines that Alaskans will write the rules governing cruise ship behavior, instead of the cruise lines telling Alaskans what will be. Second, a group of Alaskans with almost no funding defeated a multi-million dollar public relations campaign and proved that Alaska's elections are not for sale to the highest bidder.

Joe Geldhof, the other co-drafter of Ballot Measure 2 cited the industry's negative, misleading campaign as a major factor in the outcome. "Folks were bombarded with ads on TV, radio, in newspapers, and through the mail. The ads ignored the issues and were designed to spread fear through Alaska's communities. Their plan backfired - people saw through the propaganda and voted for what they knew was best for the State."

Campaign coordinator Michelle Meyer noted the three year effort to put the measure on the ballot would have been impossible without the support of the Alaska Native Sisterhood and Alaska Native Brotherhood, who saw the measure as necessary for ensuring that traditional foods would be safe for generations to come.

Despite the hostile campaign waged by the billionaire cruise lines, nearly every Alaska community voted to pass Measure 2. Communities with direct involvement with the cruise industry polled the strongest YES vote, in most cases by a margin of ~ 25 points. According to Meyer, "The fight isn't over, Alaskans must remain involved in the process of adopting the principles of the measure into practice, to ensure the legislature uphold the intent and purpose of Ballot Measure 2."

###