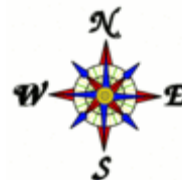


CSAW
Campaign to Safeguard America's Waters



Earth Island Institute



Responsible Cruising in Alaska

For Immediate Release 7/29/08

Watchdog Groups File 3rd Notice to Sue Cruise Lines for Breaking Alaska Law

The groups sponsoring the 2006 Alaska Cruise Ship Ballot Measure filed a third notice of intent to sue members of the Alaska Cruise Association in as many weeks. Alaska's cruise ship pollution control law allows citizens to sue the industry for failure to comply after posting a 45-day notice of intent to sue, and if necessary, sue the State for failure to enforce the law.

The first notice was filed in early July after the manager of the Alaska Ocean Ranger program, the independent monitoring program for cruise ship wastewater treatment, issued a report detailing a systematic effort by ACA member lines to block Ranger access to equipment, personnel, and logbooks aboard ship. The second notice was filed about a week later after a Royal Caribbean ship admitted illegally dumping ~20,000 gallons of untreated wastewater into Chatham Straits in S.E. Alaska. This third notice, filed yesterday with the State Attorney General and the Commissioner of the Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), calls for more charges to be brought against the industry and a revocation of discharge permits to some ships because a key component of the State's discharge permit system was flagrantly ignored.

Cruise ships that couldn't meet State Water Quality Standards for metals and ammonia were generously provided with less stringent interim effluent limits for two years under a compliance order that accompanied ADEC's recent permit. In order to legally operate under the permit, the ships were required to submit an SRE or 'Source Reduction Evaluation' within 60 days of submitting their application. An SRE must describe what standards they can't meet, how they intend to fix those problems, and state when the problems will be fixed. The industry submissions only told the State they hoped to have the problems identified by the end of the year, and possible technical solutions might be identified to remedy their non-compliant discharges if they were "practicable for implementation in a cruise ship environment." According to Gershon Cohen of the Earth Island Institute; "The cruise line SRE reports made a farce of the ADEC permit requirement. Cruise lines making billions of dollars in profits have no business telling the State what is "practicable" when it comes to meeting our aquatic life standards."

"Not good enough," said Chip Thoma, President of RCA, "No one is being fooled by the cruise line's shenanigans. Their formal request for a stay in the permit review process and their failure to properly address the SRE permit requirement are part and parcel of the same agenda – push back the compliance date with Alaska standards until they've had a chance to twist arms in Juneau next winter."

Joe Geldhof, attorney for the citizen's groups, summed up the action: "A legitimate SRE submission would have demonstrated the cruise lines know they can meet our standards if they try. Regardless, just as with their recent self-inflicted scandal over using bogus numbers for the copper concentrations in Ketchikan's drinking water, the cruise lines at every turn have continued to show a remarkable disregard for the rule of law. This 45-day notice puts the industry and ADEC on notice that we expect them both to step up to the plate and act appropriately, or face justifiable legal consequences."

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