

## **CRUISE SHIP FACT SHEET**

### **National Legislation Is Needed To Protect U.S. Waters From Cruise Ship Pollution**

A coalition of states and conservation organizations are seeking Congressional sponsorship of legislation to protect U.S. waters from pollution by cruise ships and other large vessels. Cruise ships are small floating cities that generate enormous volumes of waste. There are currently more than 220 cruise ships carrying nearly 10 million passengers so some of the most pristine and picturesque waters of the U.S. and the world, and dozens of new ships will be entering into service during the next few years. The cruise ship industry is growing at a staggering rate of 10% per year over the past decade and 16% in 2001

#### **Wastes Generated by Cruise Ships**

Pollutants generated by giant cruise ships daily include thousands of gallons of oily bilge water, sewage, graywater from showers, sinks, laundries, baths and galleys, toxic chemicals from photo processing, dry cleaning and paints, ballast water bearing pathogens and invasive species from foreign ports, tons of garbage and solid waste, and air pollution that is the equivalent of thousands of automobiles. Under the Clean Water Act, cities and industries must treat their wastes, limit the amount of pollution they discharge, and monitor and report on discharges from sewage treatment facilities. Yet cruise ships that generate the same amount of wastes are not required to obtain Clean Water Act discharge permits. Nor are they required to monitor or report their discharges, or treat wastes from on-board laundries, galleys, baths, and showers, except in Alaska. As a result, cruise ships may discharge huge volumes of waste without adequate regulation. Even where regulated, cruise ship discharges are difficult to detect and enforce. During the past several years, two major cruise line companies (Royal Caribbean and Carnival) each paid \$18 million fines for disabling pollution equipment and discharging oil into the marine environment. Moreover, there are no water quality standards for ocean waters beyond the three-mile zone.

#### **Legislation Adopted in the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Legislation introduced by Senator Frank Murkowski from Alaska to regulate sewage and wastewater discharges from cruise ships was passed with widespread bipartisan support in the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress (Title VII of H.R. 820). Alaskan Governor Tony Knowles adopted state legislation the following year to help implement and enforce the federal legislation. However, the legislation adopted by Congress protects only Alaskan waters. Similar protections are needed for all U.S. waters.

#### **New Legislation Needed**

National legislation is needed to plug loopholes in the Clean Water Act that allow the unregulated discharge of graywater and inadequately treated sewage. In addition, new

provisions are needed to ensure that cruise ships are adequately inspected, wastes are adequately monitored and sampled, and pollution laws are adequately enforced. This new legislation should have the following components:

- Prohibit the discharge of untreated sewage and graywater by cruise ships and other large vessels that carry more than 250 passengers into the navigable waters of the U.S.
- Require NPDES permits for all cruise ship discharges into U.S. waters.
- Direct EPA to establish effluent limits for all cruise ship wastestreams and prohibit the discharge of treated sewage, graywater, and other wastewaters into U.S. waters unless such discharges meet EPA effluent limits.
- Direct EPA to identify and require the application of Best Available Treatment (BAT) technologies to all cruise ship wastestreams.
- Direct EPA to establish New Source Performance Standards for the cruise ship industry.
- Require the U.S. Coast Guard and EPA to implement a rigorous inspection program of pollution control and monitoring equipment and to sample and test all emissions and other pollution discharges.
- Require vessels to report any discharges that violate the law to the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Adopt sufficient administrative, civil and criminal penalties for enforcement, including whistle-blower and citizen suit provisions.
- Allow states to petition the EPA to establish “no-discharge zones” to protect sensitive waters.
- Allow states the authority through a savings clause to impose additional provisions to implement and enforce the federal provisions as needed.
- Require the EPA to issue new regulations to monitor and reduce air emissions that threaten public health, including smokestack and incinerator emissions.
- Require EPA to establish marine water quality standards and no discharge zones.