

THE CLEAN CRUISE SHIP ACT

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Cruise ships are big business and getting bigger. The ships of today are like floating cities, carrying thousands of people. Each year, nearly 200 cruise ships carry 9.5 million passengers to and through the most beautiful and sensitive marine ecosystems. Three fourths of these trips occur in the United States.

Additionally, the cruise ship industry continues to expand, putting an even greater strain on our oceans. Worldwide cruise passengers are projected to increase 60% from 10 million in 2000 to more than 16 million in 2009.



Yet, cruise ships generate a staggering amount of waste and are not subject to the same wastewater regulations that govern municipalities and land-based industries. This waste not only carries bacteria that are harmful to humans, but it can also sicken and kill marine life, including corals, and contribute to algae blooms that cloud the water, reduce oxygen levels and kill fish. Raw sewage can contaminate shellfish beds which could end up making people sick.

THE CURRENT SITUATION:

Sewage:

- Cruise ships may legally dump raw sewage 3 miles from shore.
- While ships are supposed to have a marine sanitation device (MSD) on board and are required to treat their wastes within 3 miles of shore, there are no federal requirements to ensure the device is operating. Ships need not monitor, track or report these discharges.
- Cruise ship MSDs typically fail to meet the effluent standards they were designed to meet. Sampling in Alaska showed that MSDs were not functioning properly across the board.

Graywater (water from laundries, sinks, kitchens, and showers):

- There are no federal standards for graywater, except in Alaskan waters and the Great Lakes for which Congress passed special legislation.
- Currently a cruise ship can legally dump this wastewater, which may contain bleach, detergents and other harmful substances, almost anywhere else in the ocean (with the exception of the state waters of California). This includes sensitive coastal habitats like coral reefs.
- Samples taken in Alaska reveal that cruise ship graywater contains extremely high levels of fecal coliform and total suspended solids, as well as concentrations of copper, lead, nickel and zinc that routinely exceed state water quality standards for municipalities.

Oily Bilge Water:

- The Clean Water Act requires ships to have an oily water separator on board, but cruise lines have routinely illegally bypassed the separators to discharge higher concentrations of oil.

Daily, each ship can easily generate:

25,000 gallons of sewage

143,000 gallons of graywater from laundries, sinks, kitchens and showers

4,000 gallons of oily bilge water

Toxic chemicals from photo processing, dry cleaning, paints

More than a ton of garbage

ILLEGAL DISCHARGES

Illegal environmental behavior is pervasive throughout the cruise industry. From 1993 to 2003, cruise ships committed more than 300 acts of dumping oil, garbage, hazardous waste, sewage and graywater, inflicting damage to coral reefs, and falsifying environmental records, paying more than \$50 million in fines and penalties. Worse, the illegal violations have continued even after multimillion dollar fines were levied against the largest cruise lines.



The Clean Cruise Ship Act would plug the existing loopholes of federal law, require ships to treat their wastewater wherever they operate, and authorize broadened enforcement authority.

The Clean Cruise Ship Act would:

- Prohibit discharges of untreated sewage, graywater and bilge water within 12 miles of U.S. shore and within the Great Lakes.
- Establish improved standards for levels of fecal coliform, total suspended solids (TSS), and chlorine in treated sewage and graywater
- Require the Coast Guard and EPA to issue final standards for the contaminants listed above taking into account the best available technology, with the goal of zero pollutant discharge from sewage or graywater by 2015.
- Ensure illegal discharges do not continue by requiring better inspection and monitoring.

This legislation promotes the public interest. The public demands clean water. A national poll commissioned by Oceana showed that 82% of cruise passengers want stronger laws regarding cruise ship pollution. In addition, 90% of passengers surveyed support tougher sewage treatment standards, improved monitoring and inspection of cruise ships, and actions to require cruise ships to upgrade their onboard waste treatment systems to more fully treat sewage before it is released into the water. More than six out of ten cruise customers want cleaner cruises and are willing to pay more for them.

The Clean Cruise Ship Act ensures a sustainable future for the cruise industry by helping protect the fragile ecosystems the industry depends upon for its long-term economic benefit.

It's time to strengthen requirements on the cruise industry to bring these floating cities in line with current pollution treatment standards.

The Clean Cruise Ship Act is the answer our oceans and coasts need.

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