



EARTHJUSTICE



Cruise Ships

Impacts on the Island of Moloka'i

EARTHJUSTICE HAS BEEN WORKING WITH RESIDENTS ON MOLOKA'I CONCERNED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CRUISE SHIPS. WE HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR A REVIEW OF THE IMPACTS OF CRUISE SHIP VISITS TO MOLOKA'I AND HAVE ALSO PARTICIPATED IN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH REGULATION OF CRUISE SHIP POLLUTION STATEWIDE. THE RECENT RAPID GROWTH IN CRUISE TRAFFIC IN HAWAII POSES UNIQUE RISKS TO OUR ISLAND ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY. BUT IT ALSO OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF MOLOKA'I AND THE ENTIRE STATE TO BECOME INFORMED ABOUT THE PROBLEM AND ENSURE THAT THE CRUISE INDUSTRY PROCEEDS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

POLLUTING CITIES OF THE SEA



Moloka'i's natural environment will be at risk if the cruise ship industry remains unregulated.

Cruise ships are floating cities that carry an average of 3,000 passengers and crew (almost half of Moloka'i's entire population) and produce and discharge tremendous volumes of pollution. Yet, they need not comply with the most basic requirements of monitoring, reporting, inspection, and

enforcement applicable to land-based operations of similar size and impact. Cruise ship wastes include:

Sewage (*average 30,000 gallons a day*): Sewage carries bacteria harmful to humans and marine life, and studies revealed discharges of "treated" sewage from cruise ships to exceed federal fecal coliform standards by 10,000 to 100,000 times. Yet, no monitoring of sewage discharges occurs in Hawaii, and cruise ships may freely dump raw sewage three miles from our shores.

Gray Water (*average 255,000 gallons a day*): Cruise ships may freely dump gray water, or wastewater from laundries, showers, sinks, and dishwashers, even though studies show that gray water can contain more bacteria than sewage, as well as toxic chemicals from cleaning, laundry, and photo-processing activities.

Bilge Water (*average 7,000 thousand gallons a day*): Bilge water from ship engines and machines contains oil and chemicals

deadly to marine life. Cruise lines have paid millions in fines for illegally dumping oily waste, bypassing treatment equipment, and falsifying records.

Invasive Species: Cruise ships may bring invasive species harmful to public health and the native ecology on their hulls and in their routine discharges of hundreds of thousands of ballast water. No laws limit ballast water discharges in Hawaii.

Air Pollution: Cruise ships emit exhaust equivalent to 12,240 automobiles a day, as well as pollutants like dioxins and mercury from onboard incinerators. Yet, cruise ship air emissions remain almost entirely unregulated.



Cruise ship emissions may degrade Moloka'i's pristine air quality (Photo courtesy of the US Department of Transportation).

Garbage (*average seven tons a day*): Solid waste endangers human health and marine life and impairs the beauty of our shorelines. Cruise lines have been caught for illegally dumping trash straight into the ocean.

Coral Reef Damage: Cruise ship wastes are lethal to sensitive coral reefs, and reefs have been rapidly declining in areas of high cruise traffic. Massive cruise ship anchors, chains, and propellers may also crush reefs or suffocate them with resuspended sediment.

LACK OF OVERSIGHT, LACK OF COMPLIANCE

As described above, laws regulating cruise ship wastes are limited or nonexistent. The few laws that do exist have been routinely broken. Over the past decade, every major cruise line has been convicted of illegal dumping of conventional and hazardous wastes and conspiracy and fraud for falsifying records, resulting in tens of millions of dollars in fines.



Debris from a cruise ship that has washed up on shore (Photo courtesy of the Center for Marine Conservation).

Hawai'i has no laws controlling cruise ship pollution. Instead, a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the state and industry allows cruise lines to regulate themselves. Is this a proper way to manage the impacts of any industry, let alone one with the record of the cruise industry?

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Social and Economic Impacts: The cruise industry can alter the social fabric of small rural communities like Moloka'i. Many towns and islands in Alaska and the Caribbean are finding their local lifestyle, culture, and economy crowded out by foreign visitors and businesses. The large-scale, offshore-based tourism of the cruise industry diminishes community values of Moloka'i such as its unique rural, traditional lifestyle and commitment to agriculture, small businesses, and community-based development.

Threats to Subsistence

Activities: Moloka'i's south shore features one of the largest reef systems in the nation and the most concentrated collection of traditional fishponds in the state. These resources support time-honored subsistence practices exercised by Moloka'i residents for sustenance and the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian culture. The operation and anchorage of gigantic cruise ships in this environment endanger these resources and is equivalent to storing sewage in one's icebox or parking a dumptruck in one's garden.



One of the many fishpond restoration projects on Moloka'i that could be threatened by cruise ship pollution (Photo courtesy of Native Hawaiian Leadership Project).

Lack of Facilities to Handle Visitors: Floods of cruise passengers threaten to overtax the limited facilities and supplies on Moloka'i. Serious questions arise about how an island with no stoplights, several public restrooms, and one hospital and ambulance can handle such crowds.

For more information or to get involved please contact:

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This portion of south Moloka'i coast from Pala'au (left) to Kamiloloa (right) contains a high diversity of marine species. West of the Kaunakakai Wharf lies a lush, dark green swath of coral reef, home to hundreds of species of fish, crustaceans, and other aquatic life. Uncontrolled pollution from cruise ship visits to Moloka'i will have a dire impact on this rich ecosystem (Photo courtesy of USGS).