

## **Hawai'i Needs Cruise Ship Regulations Now**

Ocean health throughout Hawai'i Nei is being degraded by a wealthy, fast growing, polluting industry of repeat offenders with a reputation for being dishonest.

Sixteen cruise ships are currently operating throughout Hawaiian waters. By the end of 2003, cruise ships will have made 123 stops in Hawaiian ports. With Norwegian launching re-born Project America ships in addition to their foreign-flag ships, a minimum of 132 port calls is expected in 2004.

Ludicrous as it may seem, this industry is unregulated, pays no taxes and is exempt from U.S. labor and environmental laws. Floating resorts the size of small cities dump everything from human waste, styrofoam, rubbish, photo processing and dry cleaning chemicals to oily bilge water and ballast water (which may contain invading species) directly into the ocean. The cruise industry is not violating any state laws. There are none.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Northwest Cruise Line Association and the State of Hawai'i, initiated by Ben Cayetano, is tantamount to a wink and a handshake. It is no more effective in regulating this industry than the paper it is written on.

The rapid increase in the number of ships promises grave consequences to Hawai'i's marine environment. The scale of the waste stream discharged from these massive ships is astounding. *Each day*, one cruise ship releases 250,000 gallons of chlorinated gray water from baths, laundry, and swimming pools. Sixteen cruise ships dump 4 million gallons of untreated wastewater directly into our ocean *every day* and *produce over 4 million* gallons of raw sewage in one week. (30,000 gallons of human waste are produced on one ship in one day).

Not only is the ocean being impacted, air quality is being affected as well. Cruise ships idle massive engines while in port. In one day, one cruise ship produces diesel exhaust equivalent to the exhaust of 10-12,000 cars. Toxic particulates are spewed out of smoke stacks settles in the ocean and soil and drifts into our lungs. (16 ships=160,000 cars/day).

Pollution violations have been the focus of national media. It is commonplace to read about gross misconduct, deception and high fines from illegal dumping. Norwegian Cruise Line settled with the EPA (after a whistle blower reported the violations) to pay one million dollars and admitted that it had repeatedly lied to U. S. Coast Guard over a period *of years* regarding the discharge of oil-contaminated bilge waste. Norwegian admitted that the intentional falsification of logbooks was designed to conceal on going illegal dumping.

In April 2002, Carnival Cruise Lines pled guilty to six felony counts and agreed to pay \$18 million in fines related to years of dumping oily discharges into waters off Florida and the Caribbean. The company wasn't convicted of polluting the sea but of lying about it to the Coast Guard on pollution-treatment records--a violation of federal law. Carnival was summons back to federal court in July, 2003 for providing subsequent "false, misleading and inaccurate information."

The concern about cruise ship pollution is not unique to Hawai'i. In fact, concerned people in many port communities throughout the world are working to address the impacts of rapidly increasing numbers of cruise ships. Citizens in California and Maine are promoting legislation. Two years ago, citizens in Alaska succeeded in securing minimal regulations and are now pursuing needed improvements. Several national organizations are working on this issue, as well.

Is the industry the promised "economic boon?" Who will pay for the larger and deeper ports? Who will pay for clean-up and destroyed reefs? Who pays if there is a decline in green sea turtles? Further, it is not clear how much of a passenger's disposable income actually cycles through the local economy. In assessing whether the cruise ship industry creates added value to our communities, we need to ask hotels and local businesses if they are benefiting, as well as surfers who encounter garbage and human waste. We need to ask the fish, honu, whales and Hawaiian monk seals who risk collision and contamination, and the paddlers who are kept out of areas when cruise ships are present due to "homeland security."

As a civil society, we must insist that elected officials and agencies act proactively to protect public health and the environment. We do not want a study, a taskforce or a promise. Hawai'i's precious and vulnerable marine ecosystems hang precariously in the balance.

At a minimum we need the following:

1. Stringent water quality standards, adequate wastewater treatment technology, strict monitored effluent standards. Reporting mechanisms, spot checks, massive civil penalties and fines for violations, including tampering with pollution treatment or altering reporting records.
2. Funding must be secured for adequate enforcement and on-board monitors.
3. State of the art pollution control technology should be phased as soon as possible for every cruise ship operating in Hawai'i.
4. Waste reduction practices including recycling and passenger education must be in place.
5. A moratorium of on-board incineration until there is an independent assessment of ash toxicity. Burning plastic can create dioxin. The ash needs to be fully assessed for toxic chemical levels.
6. Alternative sources of fuel and energy must be pursued. Cruise ships must act to minimize dependence on fossil fuels. Employ solar other viable alternative technology and utilize alternatives to diesel fuel, such as natural gas.
7. All environmental and labor laws applicable in the United States must be applied to workers operating on cruise ships in Hawai'i.
8. Fees from cruise ships to cover all the costs of their operations in Hawai'i's waters.

Senators Cal Kawamoto, Willie Espero, and Melodie Aduja were responsible for killing a reasonable cruise ship resolution in the last session that requested research on laws in other jurisdictions.

We should accept nothing less than strong enforceable regulations with an allocation of adequate funding for enforcement and monitoring. We cannot allow the protection of the ocean or public health to be compromised. We must make informed decisions and take action that insures that the state adopt strong regulations. (Resources, links and reports on cruise ships are available at [www.kahea.org](http://www.kahea.org).)

- Sign up for Action Alerts at [www.kahea.org](http://www.kahea.org) to receive periodic emails on key issues with the option to take direct action.
- Write your legislator and insist on strong regulations be passed this session.
- Tell Governor Lingle that we demand stringent statewide regulations. Make it clear that the ocean deserves nothing less.
- Support the effort to move legislation forward. Send tax-deductible donations to The Sierra Club, O'ahu Chapter to support their lobbying efforts this session.
- Come hear the author of *Cruise Ship Blues: The Underside of the Cruise Ship Industry*. Professor Ross Klein, widely renowned cruise ship expert will be speaking throughout Hawai'i from October 9 to 14. Call KAHEA (808) 524-8220 for additional information.

Mahalo nui loa,

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KAHEA: the Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance