



PRESS RELEASE

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New Cruise Ship Initiative Launched to Protect Alaskan Waters

*Ballot measure requires on-board pollution monitors and discharge permits,
and imposes \$50 in per-passenger fees and taxes*

Juneau, AK—Bluewater Network has joined Alaska groups in sponsoring a ballot initiative that would impose a \$50 statewide head tax on cruise ship passengers. The measure will also require that cruise ships get wastewater discharge permits, turn over a percentage of gambling profits to the state and pay Alaska corporate income tax. Organizers have collected the required 100 signatures and submitted the proposed ballot initiative to the Alaska Division of Elections for approval. Once certified, organizers will spend the summer collecting the needed signatures to get it on the ballot.

The Alaska Cruise Ship Initiative is sponsored by Juneau-based Responsible Cruising in Alaska (RCA), the Campaign to Safeguard America's Waters (CSAW -- an Alaska-based project of the Earth Island Institute), and Bluewater Network of San Francisco. The Alaska Public Interest Research Group will coordinate a statewide signature gathering effort this summer to place the initiative on the November 2004 ballot.

"The cruise industry has had a free ride in Alaska's waters for too long," said Teri Shore, Clean Vessels Campaigner for Bluewater Network. "It's about time cruise lines helped protect Alaska's natural treasures and pay income taxes like everyone else."

The initiative will reinstate an apportioned income tax on the cruise industry at the same rate paid by other major industries, require cruise ships to pay the same percentage of gambling proceeds to the state paid by other gaming operators, and establish an excise tax based on berth capacity of \$46/passenger.

"It makes no sense for Alaskans to sit by and watch our budget deficit grow while one of the largest and fastest growing industries operating in the state makes billions of dollars of profits without paying their fair share of taxes," according to Joe Geldhof of RCA, a prime sponsor and drafter of the initiative.

Cruise ship operators will be required to carry discharge permits that limit pollution levels for all wastewater dumped into Alaskan waters. Federal law requires every oil, mining, timber, and seafood processing operation to have a permit to discharge polluted wastewater, but cruise ships are exempt.

"The cruise ship industry has been hiding behind a Clean Water Act permit exemption for over 20 years intended for vessels with a handful of crewmen aboard, and cruise ship lobbyists successfully



extended that exemption to state law – even though virtually every major cruise line has been convicted of multiple felony charges for dumping in the last decade,” stated C-SAW Director Gershon Cohen, the other principal drafter of the initiative.

In addition, the cruise ships will be required to pay a \$4 fee per passenger fee to fund placing an independent monitor aboard every ship in Alaska waters to observe wastewater treatment practices and inspect pollution control equipment.

Karen Jettmar, an eco-tour operator based in Anchorage is the initiative’s third prime sponsor. She said: “Our tourism economy, our fishing economy, and our ability to subsistence harvest healthy foods depend upon everyone meeting minimal pollution standards. The foreign-based cruise ship industry violates our pollution laws, builds their own hotels, runs their own bus lines, and works with the few chosen tour excursion operators that give them a big kickback on their ticket sales. This is wrong – and we all know they can afford to do it right.”

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