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CRUISE SHIP DUMPING BANS MOVE TO SENATE

Senators Support Bills to Regulate Cruise Ship Pollution

Sacramento, CA – State senators today supported a ban on sewage dumping by cruise ships sponsored by Bluewater Network, voting it out of Senate Appropriations and on to the full Senate today. The bill (AB2672-Simitian) garnered the needed seven votes to move it to the Senate Floor despite heavy cruise industry lobbying against it.

The Nakano graywater bill (AB2093) was unopposed by the cruise industry and passed out of the same senate committee and on to the Senate last week.

“More cruise ships may be welcome in California’s ports, but discharges of sewage and dirty water are not,” said Teri Shore of Bluewater Network. “The good news is that cruise ships don’t need to use our coastline as a dumping ground. These bills will make sure they won’t.” Both bills require reporting of discharges and penalties up to \$25,000 per day for violations of the no-discharge policies or failure to report.

Last year, both sewage and graywater dumping bans were stripped from similar bills due to cruise industry lobbying and opposition from legislators who represent cruise ship ports and destinations.

“No dumping always trumps dumping when it comes to protecting our coastal waters,” said Assemblyman Joe Simitian. “And we know cruise ships can hold all wastewater long enough to dump outside state waters or beyond.”

Cruise ships are like floating cities that carry as many as 5,000 passengers and crew. On a typical one-week voyage, each ship generates more than 200,000 gallons of sewage and 1 million gallons of graywater from sinks, showers and kitchens. All of it ends up in the ocean, some treated, some not.

AB 2093 (Nakano) would prohibit cruise ships from discharging graywater from kitchens, laundries and showers into state waters. Currently graywater is unregulated and can be discharged anywhere, including ports and harbors.

AB2672 (Simitian) would prohibit cruise ships from dumping sewage (treated or untreated) into state waters. Currently, cruise ships can dump treated sewage anywhere, including into ports and harbors. Untreated sewage can be dumped just outside state waters. Treated wastewater is not monitored or tested to determine if it meets effluent standards. If necessary, the state will apply to the US EPA to secure the no-discharge policy.

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