



ALASKA ACT
Alaska Alliance
for Cruise Travel

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January 23, 2013

The Honorable Cathy Giessel
Senate Resources Chair
State Capitol Room #427
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: SB 29 - An Act relating to the regulation of wastewater discharge from commercial passenger vessels in state waters.

Dear Senator Giessel,

On behalf of the Alaska Alliance for Cruise Travel (Alaska ACT), I would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 29, regarding Commercial Passenger Vessel permits.

Alaska ACT was formed in 2010, following the significant decline within the tourism industry in Alaska. Our primary mission is to help promote a favorable business climate in Alaska so this industry can thrive. We have 800 members across the state that own, operate, and work in businesses that depend upon visitor spending.

We recognize the importance of having a strong regulatory environment, which protects our marine environment. This season, we will have approximately 1 million cruise passengers visit our state; all looking to experience the natural beauty of Alaska. Many of our members provide shore excursions to cruise passengers in order to provide them an even closer, more personal experience with Alaska's remarkable scenery. There is no question, protecting the environment is critical for the long-term success of our businesses.

We are thankful for the Legislature's effort to create the science panel to look at the current water treatment technology, other available treatment technology and the impact upon the environment. We certainly support the panel's findings that cruise ships have very effective treatment systems, which today still are the most effective systems available. The panel also confirmed that the initiative standards are not only unachievable, they are not necessary given the performance of current systems and DEC's ability to protect the environment through the permitting process.

Given the panel's findings, we applaud the Governor's effort to amend the statutes and we request that the Legislature consider and pass SB 29 early enough to give DEC time to issue a permit for the rapidly approaching 2013 season. Having a reasonable permit in place is a critical component to the success of our businesses and the many jobs created across Alaska.

On behalf of our organization we thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Bob Berto,
President
Alaska ACT