



Governor Michael J. Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

February 21, 2019

The Honorable Cathy Giessel
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Giessel:

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill repealing the Ocean Rangers Program.

The Ocean Rangers Program, codified at AS 46.03.476, requires large commercial vessels operating in state waters to have independent observers, "ocean rangers," on board to monitor compliance with marine discharge and pollution laws. To pay for the program, AS 43.03.480(d) imposes a \$4 fee for each berth on commercial passenger vessels with 250 or more berths. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) administers the program indirectly through a contractor that hires and supervises the rangers.

This program provides limited benefit to residents of the state but imposes a \$4 fee for each berth on large commercial passenger vessels. Repealing the program will reduce the state's budget by nearly \$4,000,000.00 each year.

Eliminating this program does not significantly affect the regulation of cruise ships in state waters. The program itself does not establish substantive environmental standards. Department permitting and compliance staff will still monitor cruise ships for compliance with state wastewater and air quality permits and regulations through records reviews, inspections in port, opacity monitoring, and vessel tracking.

The existing Ocean Rangers contract expires on October 31, 2019. The effective date of January 1, 2020 would allow the program to run through the summer 2019 cruise ship season and complete any post-season work or fee reconciliation.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. J. Dunleavy".

Michael J. Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure