



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Environmental  
Conservation

DIVISION OF WATER

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January 22, 2014

The Honorable Eric Feige  
House Resources Committee, Co-Chair  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Dan Saddler  
House Resources Committee, Co-Chair  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Update on House Bill 80 - cruise ship wastewater discharge general permit

Dear Representative Feige and Representative Saddler:

House Bill (HB) 80 passed in the first session of the 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative session amending the cruise ship wastewater statutes in AS 46.03 Article 7. Among other things HB 80 extended the term of the present general permit to 2015, which many large cruise ships rely on to authorize their treated discharges to Alaska waters; and authorized the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to grant "mixing zones" in future permits. The bill did not change Alaska water quality standards. This letter provides an update on DEC's development of a draft of the next cruise ship wastewater general permit and the public process we will be following in finalizing that permit.

Because of the continuing public interest in Southeast Alaska regarding the effect of HB 80 and how DEC would apply its existing mixing zone requirements to large cruise ships to protect water quality, I made a number of presentations over the last year to groups in Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka, providing information about the amounts, contents and location of ship discharges and how DEC's mixing zone regulations are applied around the state to similar discharges to protect water quality.

In developing the next general permit, the Division of Water in DEC has used actual discharge data and mathematical models to identify how the discharge will disperse in the receiving water and the expected concentration of regulated pollutants. Using this information and applying state mixing zone regulations, the Division has drafted a new cruise ship general permit in accordance with statute (AS 46.03.462). The draft permit is similar to many other wastewater discharge permits, such as those for land-based public wastewater treatment plants, which have been operating with authorized mixing zones for many years throughout Alaska. Mixing zones will be available for underway and stationary (at the dock) discharges, with some restrictions. Permit conditions will continue to be more stringent for at-the-dock discharges which can be confined by proximity to shore. The draft permit and fact sheet, which explains to the public how DEC developed the proposed mixing zone authorization and describes other key terms in the draft permit, are under internal review.

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We intend to public notice the draft permit in 2014. There will be the opportunity for the public to comment on the draft. We will use these comments to prepare and issue the final general permit, which we hope to have in place before the start of the 2014 cruise seasons. If it takes additional time, there is the option to continue to cover the large cruise ship discharges under the existing general permit, which doesn't expire until 2015.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michelle Bonnet Hale". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Michelle Bonnet Hale  
Director