

TO: ALASKA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

FROM: TIM F. NELICK, ALASKA OCEAN RANGER (2012-2018)  
USCG licensed unlimited Horsepower Marine Chief Engineer  
USCG licensed unlimited tonnage Master of Vessels upon Oceans  
Recipient: US Navy Commendation medals (2); Viet Nam Service Medal  
U.S. Maritime Administration Outstanding Achievement Award  
U.S. Maritime Administration Expeditionary Award

SUBJ: OCEAN RANGER PROGRAM

Hon. Co-Chair Fields, Hon. Co-Chair Kreiss-Tomkins, Hon members of the State Affairs Committee,

I have operated ships at sea and in coastal waters since 1970 (U.S. Navy, Viet Nam). My experience includes vessels of all descriptions and types, on most of the world's bodies of water, and in shipboard positions up to and including Master and Chief Engineer. I've been serving as an Ocean Ranger since 2012. I know how ships operate and their impact on the environment. I understand maritime regulatory compliance, and lack of such. I have seen how mariners can purposely or accidentally operate in contravention to regulations, and I can guarantee that without a rigorous regimen of verification, such as has been provided by the Ocean Rangers embarked upon passenger vessels in Alaska waters, regulations will be broken.

The forms of pollution that ships cause include the intentional or unintentional introduction into the waters and air of Alaska: waste water and sewage, oil and oily waste, exhaust scrubber discharge, chemicals from pools, spas, barbershops, spillage of paint and other chemicals from crew exterior maintenance; air pollution from engine exhaust and incinerators, among other forms of pollution. THERE ARE NO RELIABLE TECHNICAL MEANS FOR DETECTING THESE TYPES OF POLLUTION, particularly when the ship (unlike stationary industrial sites) gets underway and moves out of the view and scrutiny of shoreside oversight. Where technical devices have been mandated (e.g. OWS and Oil Content Monitors) work-arounds are devised. Simply knowing when valves are opened and closed tells us little. What is flowing through those lines into the waters of Alaska? Logbook entries are simply ink on paper.

In 2006, the voice of the Alaskan citizenry was heard and the Alaska Ocean Ranger Program was initiated. Since that time, the voice of the citizenry has not altered. And the voice of the visitors to Alaska – the passengers – is in harmony with the citizenry, as indicated by the comments I've heard while on shipboard Ocean Ranger duty. Alaska Ocean Rangers are the eyes, ears, and nose of the state of Alaska, 24 hrs/day. Even our presence on board, in and of itself, is a deterrent to ship pollution. Self-reporting is likely to substantially decrease with the cruise lines' knowledge that the watchful eyes of the Ocean Ranger are not on board. Passengers express complete willingness, and in fact enthusiasm to make their small contribution to fund the program.

The Ocean Ranger program is self-funding, is desired by the electorate, and is desired by the passengers. Technical means cannot replace the work of the Ocean Rangers. One might ask: "Who, then, is against the Ocean Ranger Program as it has been implemented since 2006?" In my opinion, only a few vested interests: NOT the Alaskan populace, NOT the passengers, NOT the environment.

Very respectfully submitted,



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