

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 19, 2004
9:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch, Chair
Representative Jim Holm, Vice Chair
Representative John Coghill
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Ethan Berkowitz

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW - WASTEWATER IMPACTS TO THE SMALL CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY

TAPES

04-20, SIDE(S) A & B

CHAIR BRUCE WEYHRAUCH convened the meeting of the House State Affairs Standing Committee at 9:06 a.m.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

DAN EASTON, Director, Division of Water, Department of Environmental Conservation, introduced the recently released report entitled "Assessment of Cruise Ship and Ferry Wastewater Impacts in Alaska" published January 26, 2004. The report reflects 3 years of findings with regard to the wastewater discharged by small cruise and ferry vessels.

DENISE KOCH, Environmental Specialist, Commercial Passenger Vessel Program, Department of Environmental Conservation, spoke to the points of the report relating to small passenger vessels. Three years of sample data has been collected regarding the smaller vessels. The report speaks to three types of water discharged: gray water (from showers/sinks), black water (originates from the toilet), and a combination of both gray and black water. Some problems were discovered that needed to be addressed with regard to meeting the fecal coliform standard.

Ms. Koch concluded her remarks by stating it was decided that small ships should remain in the program due to the problems during stationary dilution/discharge.

There were no questions from the committee for the DEC representatives.

BRICE BROCKWAY, Cruise West, testified to his company's concern with Alaska's requirements. Equipment that would allow them to meet DEC standards is too large to fit into their seven cruise vessels. The technology is available, on a large scale, for vessels to comply with Alaska standards, which are different [more stringent], than other states and even federal standards. Their cruise vessels would have to be widened and lengthened to accommodate the oversized equipment.

CAPTAIN MICHAEL JONES, Lindblad Explorations, informed the committee that vessels SEA LION and SEA BIRD operate in Alaskan waters. They are U.S. Operated, U.S. Vessels, with a U.S. Crew. Captain Jones explained his vessels tankage does not accommodate the new technology. Larger vessels have different capabilities than the smaller ships. In response to Representative Weyhrauch's comment regarding dumping wastewater in the "Donut Holes", Captain Jones explained that those areas do not apply to his ships.

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA spoke to the subject and congratulated DEC on the report. She stated Alaska is a worldwide leader in the wastewater treatment program for both large and small vessels. The small ship companies have been working diligently with DEC to address any problems regarding wastewater discharges. The owners are using "best management practices."

CHAIR WEYHRAUCH stated there will be more scrutiny by the legislature due to the concerns brought forward by Mr. Brockway and Captain Jones.

CAPTAIN MICHAEL JONES spoke to the positive approach Alaska is taking and the good working relationship between the small cruise ship lines and the Department of Environmental Conservation. Captain Jones stated that he and Mr. Brockway are representing a group called the Alaska Small Cruise Vessel Association of which they are members.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON questioned Cruise West with regard to its 292-foot vessel and whether it is constrained in the same way as the smaller vessels.

MR. BROCKWAY explained the larger vessel has better tankage so it's able to hold longer, although the [larger] ship still has the same types of problems as the smaller vessels.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the House Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2214, and after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.