

MEMORANDUM

Background Memo on Cruise Ship Issue

From: Conservation Working Group

To: Sanctuary Advisory Council

Re: Proposed Resolution on Cruise Ship Discharges

Date: January 23, 2003

Summary

The attached resolution recommends adoption of a Sanctuary regulation prohibiting cruise ship discharges and initiating a Sanctuary education program for cruise line passengers and crew.

Overview

At its December 2002 meeting, the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) voted unanimously to consider, at its February 2003 meeting, a resolution prohibiting cruise ship discharges within Sanctuary waters.

In 2002, three large cruise ships visited Monterey Bay, raising significant community concerns about potential pollution of Sanctuary waters. Prior to the first cruise ship visit in May 2002; Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) staff raised these concerns with the visiting cruise lines. In response, the three cruise lines (Princess, Royal Caribbean and Crystal) agreed to abide by a voluntary no-discharge policy within Sanctuary waters as well as to use recommended anchoring locations and follow the vessel traffic lanes. At the June SAC meeting in Big Sur, the Advisory Council voted to recommend that Sanctuary staff continue working with all cruise lines planning visits to the MBNMS to ensure continued compliance with a zero discharge policy. Thirteen cruise ship visits are currently planned for 2003 raising concerns about lack of an effective enforcement mechanism for preventing pollution from cruise ships.

General Information on Cruise Ship Industry and Pollution

The capacity of cruise ships in California grew by 67% between 1990-1998. Many of the ships in California waters transit the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and a growing number are expected to visit the port of Monterey in coming years. Modern cruise ships, including the three that visited the Monterey Bay in 2002, and the thirteen expected to visit in 2003, are essentially floating cities, carrying thousands of passengers and generating enormous volumes of waste. However, cruise ship wastewater is not subject to the same stringent regulations as similar waste streams coming from land based sources. Unfortunately the cruise line industry has a history of illegal dumping in pristine natural areas around the world. In the past five years alone, major cruise lines have paid more than \$50 million in criminal penalties for illegal

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pollution. In recent years, major cruise lines have been convicted of illegal dumping involving raw sewage, oil, and other hazardous waste.

Although disposal of oily bilge water and untreated sewage is already prohibited in the MBNMS, discharge of other wastes including graywater, treated sewage, ballast water and deck wash, may contribute to water quality problems in Sanctuary waters and there is strong evidence of cross contamination of waste streams on cruise ships, resulting in otherwise legal waste streams exceeding legal limits for pollutants on a regular basis. Cruise ship wastewater sampling data from Alaska (the only state that currently requires such testing) demonstrates that treated sewage from cruise ships is frequently not in compliance with treatment standards. In addition, the Alaska testing revealed that 75 percent of the samples taken from supposedly benign graywater were over five times the fecal coliform standard for sewage from treatment systems.

In response to Alaska's legislation regulating cruise ship discharges (passed in 2001), some vessels have installed advanced wastewater treatment systems for treating black and graywater prior to ocean disposal. Because these systems are new, their ability to function effectively over time is yet untested. Furthermore, advanced wastewater systems require ongoing monitoring and maintenance to be effective. In August 2002, a ship with an advanced wastewater treatment system (Holland American's *Ryndam*) reportedly released tens of thousands of gallons of partially treated sewage in Juneau harbor when its system failed.

Community Support for Prohibition on Cruise Ship Discharges in Sanctuary

In recent months, the cities of Monterey, Pacific Grove and Santa Cruz, as well as the Santa Cruz and Monterey County Boards of Supervisors and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board have all gone on record supporting a prohibition on cruise ship discharges within MBNMS waters. Conservation and community organizations including the League of Women Voters (Santa Cruz, Salinas and Monterey Chapters), Save Our Shores, the Surfrider Foundation, Friends of the Sea Otter, Oceana, and The Ocean Conservancy, also support a prohibition on cruise ship discharges in MBNMS waters.

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Proposed Sanctuary Advisory Council Resolution Calling for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to Adopt a Regulation Prohibiting Discharge of Waste from Cruise Ships Within Sanctuary Waters

Whereas, the designation document for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary acknowledges that water quality is critical to health of its marine ecosystem, and

Whereas, since Sanctuary designation, tremendous effort has been made by the Sanctuary, its partner agencies, and local jurisdictions to reduce land based sources of pollution; and

Whereas, at the time of Sanctuary designation, vessel discharges (excluding oily bilge wastes and raw sewage) were exempted from the general prohibition on discharging materials into the Sanctuary; and

Whereas, with the increase in visitation by large cruise ships to the MBNMS, it has become evident that this exemption may allow large volumes of untreated or inadequately treated wastewaters to be discharged by these types of vessels within the MBNMS with potential adverse impacts to Sanctuary resources and qualities, including the economies of coastal communities; and

Whereas, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) believes that routine discharges from cruise ships - - all wastewater (including sewage and graywater), ballast water, water discharged through oil separators (bilge water) and all forms of solid waste - - can cause unnecessary and unacceptable harm to the marine resources of the Sanctuary; and

Whereas, there is strong community support for a ban on cruise ship discharges within the Sanctuary;

Be it hereby resolved that the Sanctuary Advisory Council recommends adoption of a Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary regulation to prohibit such discharges. The SAC further recommends that an education program be designed for the benefit of cruise lines passengers and crew that would highlight the unique protected resources of the MBNMS. For the purposes of this resolution, a cruise ship is defined as a commercial passenger vessel carrying more than 250 passengers and providing overnight accommodations.