

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Resources Committee

Senator Scott Ogan, Chair

Senator Fred Dyson
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Georgianna Lincoln
Senator Ralph Seekins
Senator Ben Stevens
Senator Tom Wagoner



State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4907
Fax: (907) 465-3265

SB 361: Sponsor Statement

Small Cruise Ship Discharge

In 2001, the Alaska Legislature enacted the [Commercial Vessel Environmental Compliance Program](#) via [HB 260](#). This was a collaborative effort by the cruise ship industry, the Legislature, and the Department of Environmental Conservation that established stringent guidelines for black and graywater disposal in Alaskan waters. Since passage of HB 260, most large cruise ships discharging into Alaskan waters have installed advanced wastewater treatment systems resulting in dramatically improved water quality samplings, according to a recent report authored by DEC.

In addition to the large cruise vessels, HB 260 also required small cruise vessels to comply with the same standards. Even though the smaller vessels contribute approximately 3% of the wastewater discharged in Alaskan waters in 2001, the assumption was made that environmental technologies developed by the large vessels would "filter down" and be applied to the smaller vessels. HB 260 gave the industry, including the small commercial vessels, until July 2004 to comply.

As it turned out, the technological advances route wasn't a simple fit for the smaller vessels and consequently, these vessels cannot feasibly comply with the Commercial Vessel Environmental Compliance Program. According to the Assessment Report, the small vessels' trouble spots are readings that exceed the Alaska Water Quality Standards (AWQS) while stationary. The discharge meets the AWQS while underway due to the large dilution factor. As a consequence, and in order for these vessels to continue plying Alaskan waters, an alternative regulatory scheme that focuses on minimizing discharge is required.

Recently, such an alternative plan has been devised. The Small Commercial Vessel Association and the DEC have reached an accord that both protects Alaskan waters and enables the small cruise ship industry to continue operations in the state. The plan set out in [SB 361](#) deals in terms of "Best Management Practices" or BMPs for small vessels that currently operate in Alaskan waters. SB 361 also stipulates that new vessels constructed after January 1, 2004 be engineered to comply with the Compliance Program if they are to be used in Alaskan waters. This is an agreeable solution that will work for Alaska's environmental and business communities.