

Presented by: The Manager  
Introduced: 01/12/2009  
Drafted by: J.W. Hartle

## RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Serial No. 2458

### **A Resolution Urging the Alaska State Legislature to Modify the Standards Governing the Discharge of Wastewater from Cruise Ships.**

WHEREAS, during the 1990s, the size and number of cruise ships visiting Alaska coastal communities grew dramatically and became an increasingly important component of the local and regional economies; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, members of the Southeast Conference, representatives of the cruise ship industry, and local concerned citizens formed a group to explore ways to improve environmental standards for the cruise ship industry in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Cruise Ship Initiative (ACSI) group was created in 2000 to (1) Identify waste streams from cruise ships; (2) Develop pollution prevention and waste management solutions; (3) Assess and verify compliance with volunteer wastewater sampling; and (4) Keep the Alaska public informed; and

WHEREAS, in late 2000, the ACSI commissioned a Science Advisory Panel with expertise in oceanography, bacteriology, chemistry, aquatic and human toxicology, marine biology, ecology and vessel engineering to address issues concerning treatment discharge, dispersion rate, and effects of wastewater produced by commercial cruise ships; and

WHEREAS, the work of the groups noted above led to enactment of laws (AS 46.03.460 - AS 46.06.490) by the Alaska Legislature in 2001 establishing wastewater discharge standards for cruise ships and creating the Commercial Passenger Vessel Environmental Compliance Program; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation adopted regulations (18 AAC 69) to implement and interpret the laws enacted by the Legislature in 2001; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, the Alaska Legislature refined the laws enacted in 2001 (AS 46.03.460 - AS 46.06.490); and

WHEREAS, in 2006, following a two-year rule-making effort, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation adopted regulations to interpret and implement the 2004 statutory changes; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska cruise ship industry has reportedly invested more than \$200 million to install some of the most advanced wastewater treatment systems in the world; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, following adoption of regulations by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska voters approved an initiative further governing the operation and regulation of large cruise ships; and

WHEREAS, in March 2008, as a major step toward fulfilling the terms of the 2006 initiative, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation issued the first ever general permit for wastewater discharge from large cruise ships operating in Alaska waters; and

WHEREAS, according to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the standards imposed on cruise ships are far in excess of those imposed on shore-based municipal wastewater facilities, as was recognized in the Department of Environmental Conservation press release announcing the March 2008 permit, which stated:

The majority of large cruise ships operating in Alaska have advanced wastewater treatment systems that produce a very high quality discharge - much higher, for example, than shore-based municipal sewage treatment systems. Even so, cruise ship discharges are expected to have trouble meeting water quality standards for four parameters - ammonia, copper, nickel and zinc; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that it is currently unfeasible or impractical to meet discharge standards for the ammonia, copper, nickel and zinc parameters, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation applied more lenient standards during the 2008 and 2009 seasons and postponed implementation of the stricter standards until the 2010 season; and

WHEREAS, water quality standards in Alaska contemplate the use of dilution factors, such as mixing zones or short-term variances, and are not applied at the point-of-release except in the case of the Alaska cruise ship wastewater standards; and

WHEREAS, the point-of-release standards could mean that beginning in 2010, cruise ships will have to defer all discharges until they are out of Alaska waters; and

WHEREAS, compelling cruise ships to postpone discharge of wastewater until outside Alaska waters will likely shorten the time cruise ships are in port and result in fewer ports of call, which will negatively impact Juneau businesses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA:

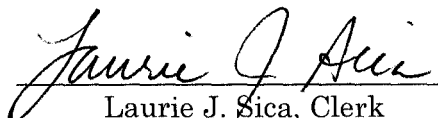
**Section 1.** That the City and Borough of Juneau urges the Alaska Legislature in 2009, to examine, based on science, the standards governing the discharge of cruise ship wastewater such that those standards will continue to protect aquatic life and the environment, but will not be technologically and financially unreasonable or impractical, and establish an effective date.

**Section 2. Effective Date.** This resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

Adopted this 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009.

  
Bruce Botelho, Mayor

Attest:

  
Laurie J. Sica, Clerk