



PRESS RELEASE

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Bluewater Network to Coast Guard: Jetski Races Violate Law

San Francisco, CA – In a letter to the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) today, Bluewater Network notified the agency that its management of personal watercraft races violates federal law such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies such as the USCG to evaluate the potential impacts upon the environment of actions such as jetski races. Moreover, NEPA requires public notice and an opportunity to comment on any jetski races permitted by the USCG.

“A significant part of the Coast Guard’s mission is to protect the aquatic environment from threats such as jetski races,” said Sean Smith Bluewater Network’s Public Lands Director. “It’s time for the USCG to comply with federal law and fully investigate the potential damage jetski races cause the nation’s environment and wildlife.”

Jetski racing has been shown to have a major impact on the environment. After just five hours of racing during last year’s Benicia (California) Water Front Festival, levels of benzene and methyl-tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) rose dramatically. Benzene, a known carcinogen, exceeded health standards by 270 percent. MTBE levels were more than 730 percent of state standards and 1900 percent above standards established for taste and odor. These tests reveal significant environmental impacts and health risks from such an event. At Lake Canandaigua in New York, two days of PWC races led to an increase in toxic substances such as benzene, toluene, and MTBE by as much as 11,000%, to levels dramatically higher than accepted health standards. PWC release 25% to 40% of their fuel-oil mixture unburned into the environment, which means that jetski races release several hundred gallons of fuel into water bodies over the course of only two days.

In 1999 the California Coastal Commission denied the International Jet Sports Boating Association a permit to move the jetski world finals to San Diego’s Mission Bay, due in part to reports that the race would dump nearly 10,000 gallons of unburned gas and oil into the environment. The Coastal Commission was also told that the three day event would release as much air pollution as driving a modern car nearly 37,000,000 miles.

At a minimum, Bluewater Network asked the USCG to review the environmental impact of the following races:

- July 30th – August 1st Benicia Waterfront Festival at Benicia, CA
- August 7-8th Milwaukee Air & Watercross Invitational at Milwaukee, WI
- August 22nd Calamas Reservoir Jet Ski Rodeo Festival at Burwell, NE
- September 18-19th Washington State Championships at the Howard Amon Park, Richland, WA
- September TBA Endurance/SuperCourse National Championships at Belton Lake, TX
- October 3rd-10th Dos Equis World Finals at Lake Havasu City, AZ

Smith said the USCG’s failure to comply with NEPA may render jetski races subject to a court challenge.

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Bluewater Network is a national environmental organization dedicated to reducing dependence on fossil fuels & eradicating other root causes of air and water pollution, global warming, & habitat destruction.

More than 20,000 members in all 50 states and four nations have already joined.

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