

**Resolution in Support
Of Bluewater Network Petition to NOAA
To adopt a national policy to prohibit discharges
From cruise ships into national marine sanctuaries**

By the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs
Annual Meeting
February 26, 2004
Savannah, GA

Whereas, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act was adopted by Congress in 1972 to “identify and designate as national marine sanctuaries areas of the marine environment which are of special national significance;” and

Whereas, the purpose of the Marine Sanctuary System is to “maintain the natural biological communities in the national marine sanctuaries and to protect, and where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations, and ecological processes;” and

Whereas, Congress has set aside 13 marine sanctuaries and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and Proposed Sanctuary that are considered “national parks of the ocean,” and

Whereas, the 13 marine sanctuaries represent 18,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters; and

Whereas, these areas represent only a very small portion of waters under U. S. authority and less than 1 percent of the ocean has been given special protections; and

Whereas Congress requires NOAA to protect Sanctuary resources from impairment; and

Whereas, NOAA has the authority to forward regulations for the entire National Marine Sanctuary system; and

Whereas, current national marine sanctuary policies generally allow the discharge of treated sewage, untreated graywater, deck wash-down, food wastes and other wastes into marine sanctuaries; and

Whereas, sanctuary-specific policies on cruise ship discharges vary; and

Whereas, cruise ship sewage and graywater discharges and other pollution pose a growing threat to marine sanctuaries; and

Whereas, each cruise ship is capable of discharging as much as 100,000 gallons of wastewater into sanctuaries and surrounding waters every day; and

Whereas, effluent from conventional and newer MSDs often fail to meet effluent standards; and

Whereas, graywater is known to contain water pollutants and contaminants such as metals, arsenic and fecal coliform concentrations as high as untreated sewage; and

Whereas, cruise ship discharges are not monitored or reported; and

Whereas, federal and international law do not prevent cruise ships from discharging into marine sanctuaries; and

Whereas, zero discharge is the highest level of protection for marine sanctuary resources; and

Whereas, today's cruise ships are equipped with technology and holding tanks that allow them to hold all discharges until outside of marine sanctuaries; and

Whereas, cruise ships can process and hold sewage and graywater for 16 hours to 5 days, according to the California Cruise Ship Task Force Report to the Legislature (August 2003); and

Whereas, such holding capacity is available regardless of the type of wastewater system onboard a cruise ship; and

Whereas, cruise ships equipped with wastewater treatment systems designed to meet Alaska state effluent standards are also able to safely hold wastewater and do not need to discharge until outside marine sanctuaries; and

Whereas, at a cruising speed, a cruise ship can easily transit any of the 14 marine sanctuaries within a day or less; and

Whereas, new cruise ships must be equipped with systems capable of discharging to shoreside facilities where available as required by international treaty (IMO-Annex IV); and

Whereas, there is no environmental, technical or economic reason why cruise ships cannot hold discharges until outside marine sanctuaries; and

Whereas, the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs have been asked to provide input to NOAA about whether to forward a national policy to protect sanctuaries from cruise ship pollution;

Be it therefore

Resolved, that the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs convened at a national meeting on February 26, 2004, in Savannah, GA, do hereby support the Bluewater Network petition and urge NOAA to adopt a national policy and promulgate regulations to prohibit all liquid and solid waste discharges by cruise ships into the waters of all the National Marine Sanctuaries.