

Greenwash of Oceanic Magnitude

Written by

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Christmas Arrives For Start of Canadian Cruise Ship Season

Travel Just - Victoria , B.C. - A BC-based environmental group tracking cruise ship pollution for years are declaring the long-awaited reforms to the Canadian Shipping Act (*new Regulations for Prevention of Pollution from Shipping and Dangerous Chemicals*) announced in Hull, P.Q today by Federal Ministers Lawrence Cannon and John Baird a "*Greenwash of Oceanic Magnitude*"

<http://www.cruisejunkie.com>

"These newly announced regulations repeal 8 sets of shipping regulations, replacing them with the weaker contaminant standards of earlier voluntary guidelines co-crafted by the cruise industry. Transport Canada now provide the cruise industry with a regulatory loophole large enough to permit the human waste plume from the wake of the cruise ship fleet with over a million passengers aboard -- to drift without penalty," says Howard Breen, Marine Campaign Coordinator of Travel Just.

Cruise ships are floating cities, carrying 5,000 or more people that on a one-week voyage can generate more than:

--1.5 million gallons of "graywater" (wastewater from sinks, showers, galleys, and laundry facilities)

--200,000 gallons of sewage, and

--35,000 gallons of oil-contaminated water

The cruise industry has a legacy of polluting the seas. From 1993 to 2003, cruise ships committed more than 300 acts of dumping oil, garbage, hazardous waste, sewage and graywater, violating air pollution laws, inflicting damage to coral reefs, and falsifying environmental records, paying more than \$80 million (U.S.) in fines and restitution within U.S. coastal waters.

See: Environmental Fines <http://www.cruisejunkie.com/envirofines.html> compiled by cruise ship expert Dr. Ross Klein, (Professor at Memorial University and author of several books about the industry).

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Loopholes in the new regulations found by Travel Just include (not exhaustive list):

- There are no overall principles, objectives or goals of the new regulation that refer to protecting public health or the environment only to meeting minimum requirements;
- A table of penalties and fines for enforceability and deterrence of violations is not referenced in the regulations;
- There is no provision for effluent or incinerator ash monitoring, sampling and testing;
- Where and when concentrated sewage sludge can be discharged is not specifically addressed;
- Greywater (from sinks, showers, pools, kitchens, etc.) is not regulated;
- All vessels with so-called advanced wastewater treatment systems will be able to discharge anywhere -- even in port;
- There is no provision to end cruise ship tertiary treatment effluent or sludge discharging in Canadian marine protected areas;
- The discharge of garbage under the new regulations are less stringent than 2004 Guidelines (reduced from 4 to 3 miles);
- Incinerator ash disposal containing heavy metals from thousands of tonnes of burned garbage aboard ships is not prohibited ;
- Waste streams from cruise ships not previously addressed in regulation continue to remain unaddressed;
- Vessel disclosure, inspection and reporting mechanisms for all waste streams from previous regulations have been simplified, reduced, or eliminated;
- No requirement for the use of low sulphur fuels;
- No new funding mechanism to recoup costs for existing or future increased inspection regime by by Transport Canada;
- No whistleblower protection or compensation is cited;
- Shipboard incineration of polyvinyl chlorides is not prohibited on all vessels;
- There is no provision for shellfish or viral pathogen studies;
- There is no public appeal or dispute mechanism cited for other stakeholders deleteriously

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impacted by ship discharges;

- No provision for installation of new waste compliance monitoring (transponders) or independent observers to inspect vessels;
- New regulations are not expected to be gazetted for another year and some provisions not enacted for another 2-4 years;
- New regulations have not been "harmonized" with stricter regulations in other U.S. jurisdictions.

"Instead of today's widely-reported crackdown on maritime pollution, through a clever sleight of hand the Conservative government of Stephen Harper has given unprecedented regulatory relief to an industry notorious for environmental felony crimes and fines that are among the highest in U.S. pollution enforcement history," says an equally astonished and concerned Breen.

"While it may be somewhat comically appropriate to give the ministers a "Big Poopie" award for this latest Conservative greenwash there is nothing comical whatsoever about the impact of their actions on environmentally sensitive B.C. marine ecosystems and the some 20 endangered coastal species that may become deleteriously affected by ongoing cruise ship pollution," cautioned Breen.

"The option of doing nothing in respect to unfettered cruise ship pollution has long passed."

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For further information, please contact:

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For further reading on the cruise ship industry see:

<http://www.cruisejunkie.com>

Where Are The New Transport Regulations?

The Government has still not made the latest version of the regulations publicly-accessible on the Transport Canada website nor provided a link in today's Ministerial news release.

Contact your Member of Parliament and request a copy.

Ministerial News Release

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/mediaroom/releases/nat/2007/07-h081e.htm>