

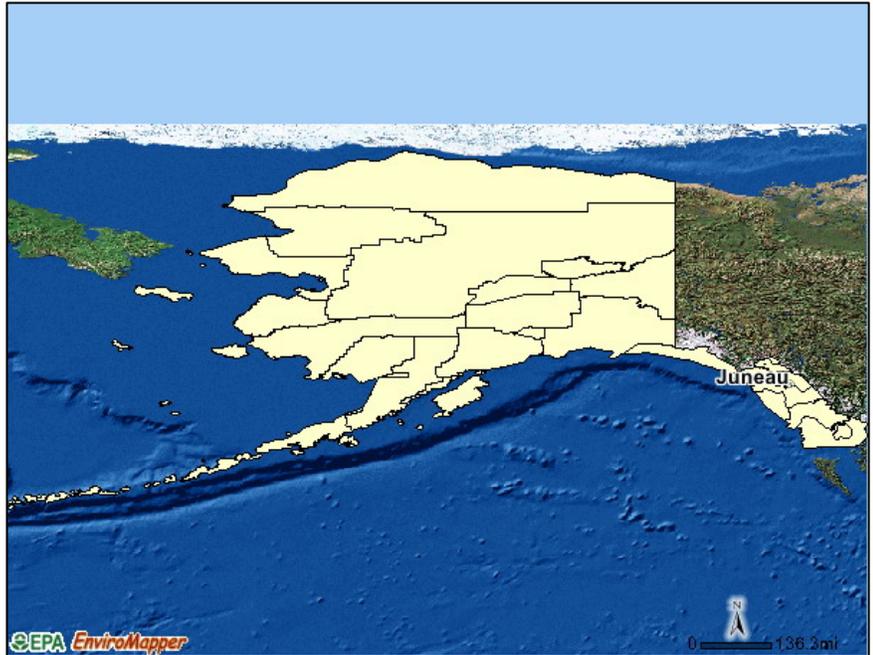


# CRUISE SHIP WASTEWATER DISCHARGES

*EPA is assessing the need for additional standards for sewage and graywater discharges from large cruise ships operating in Alaska. With ever larger cruise ships and the increasing popularity of cruises, it is essential that we know whether current standards are adequately protecting human health and the environment.*

As the cruise ship industry has expanded over the past several years, concern about potential impacts on water quality from these vessels has grown. Today, the worldwide cruise ship fleet includes more than 230 ships.

Cruise ships are literally floating cities, offering a myriad of services to their passengers. Vessels of 3,000 passengers and crew are not uncommon. These vessels often operate in pristine coastal waters.



## WHICH DISCHARGES IS EPA EVALUATING?

- EPA is evaluating sewage and graywater (waste water from showers, sinks, laundries and kitchens) discharges from cruise ships in Alaska.
- In the 1990s, there was considerable concern about cruise ships discharging untreated sewage and graywater into areas that were surrounded by Alaskan waters but were beyond three miles from shore (where such discharges were not regulated).

## WHY IS EPA CONSIDERING WASTEWATER STANDARDS FOR CRUISE SHIPS IN ALASKA?

- On December 12, 2000, Congress passed a law setting standards for sewage and graywater discharges from large cruise ships (those authorized to carry 500 or more passengers for hire) while operating in waters in and near Alaska.
- This law authorizes EPA to develop additional standards for these discharges in Alaska.



## WHAT INFORMATION IS EPA COLLECTING?

- EPA sampled wastewater from four cruise ships that operated in Alaska during the summer of 2004. The purpose of this sampling was to characterize graywater and sewage generated onboard and to evaluate the performance of various advanced sewage and graywater treatment systems.
- EPA also distributed a survey questionnaire to determine the effectiveness, costs, and impacts of sewage and graywater treatment devices on large cruise ships operating in Alaska. The information collected by the survey includes general vessel information (e.g., size, capacity, ports of call); sources of graywater and sewage; shipboard plumbing systems; data on the effectiveness of sewage and graywater treatment systems in removing pollutants of concern; costs of these systems; pollution prevention programs and management practices; and financial information and data necessary for an economic impact analysis.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT THE IMPACTS OF CRUISE SHIPS?

- Review the cruise ship company's environmental policies before booking a cruise.
- Do not pour inappropriate wastes into sinks or toilets.
- Do not toss litter overboard.
- Minimize your use of water.
- Participate in the cruise ship's recycling program (if available).
- Conserve energy by reducing unnecessary use of lights and appliances.



## HOW CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION?

- Visit our website at [www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/cruise\\_ships](http://www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/cruise_ships).
- Send an email to [Cruise.Ships@epa.gov](mailto:Cruise.Ships@epa.gov) and request to be added to our mailing list.
- Contact the Oceans and Coastal Protection Division at 202-566-1200.