

Press-Telegram

October 8, 2005

Law bans ship discharges

State: Gov. signs bill to prohibit dumping sewage, pollution sources in air, water.

By Elysse James
Staff writer

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill Thursday that will prohibit the commercial shipping industry from discarding unsafe substances into the water and air.

"This bill is a pretty common-sense bill," said Craig Noble, spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council, or NRDC. "What it does is extend a ban ... that applies to cruise ships to expand to all ocean-going vessels and will protect our coast from dumping treated sewage, oily bilge water, sewage sludge and hazardous waste."

State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, authored Senate Bill 771.

"The goal was to take the next step to ensure clean coasts off California," he said. "There's irony in the fact that if you try to burn leaves in your yard you can't, but 20 feet offshore it would be OK. Those rules don't apply now that the law is in place to protect air quality within California waters."

The legislation was supported by environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club and the NRDC. Noble said the bill makes sense since the number of commercial ships coming into California ports is expected to triple by 2020.

"Before the law was signed, more ships would mean more dumping, which means more pollution," Noble said. "This law will prevent the large increase in shipping volume from resulting in a large increase in coastal pollution."

In addition, the bill expands earlier legislation that reduces air pollution by banning incineration

three miles from the coastline.

"Port operations in general are a significant source of pollution," said Tina Cherry, spokeswoman for the South Coast Air Quality Management District. "Anything that can be done to limit or reduce emissions in the port area is seen as a benefit."

SB 771 was supported by shipping companies, including Maersk Inc. and Matson Navigation, the Santa Clara County Water District and the Air Quality Management District, according to a press release from Simitian's office.

"We thought it was the right thing to do, and we wanted to make a positive environmental contribution," said Meredith Endsley, assistant general counsel at Matson Navigation. "We already have adopted a zero solid waste dumping program, and we've got a 50-mile environmental protection zone that we have also initiated ourselves."

Matson Navigation worked with the senators to ensure the bill was realistic, Endsley said.

Tim Eichenberg, director of the Pacific Regional Office of The Ocean Conservancy, said: "This bill will stop ships from dumping waste into the oceans. There are very weak state and federal laws, in regard to dumping from vessels. There was a need for this law because of that."

The conservancy and NRDC supported Simitian's two related bills last year, Assembly Bill 471, which bans ships from incinerating waste within three miles of the coastline, and AB 2672, banning cruise ships from releasing sewage into California waters, which by law start three miles from the coast.

"Cruise ships carry so many more people than commercial vessels," Noble said. "Therefore, they produce more waste per vessel."

San Jose Mercury News

August 24, 2010

CLEAN COASTS

Feds boost sewage ban

EPA to match state law
banning ships from
dumping near shore

By Paul Rogers

progers@mercurynews.com

Cruise ships and large commercial ships will be banned from dumping any kind of sewage — even highly filtered wastewater — along California's coast out to three miles from shore, under new rules from the Obama administration.

The rules, which are scheduled to be announced Wednesday at a news conference in San Francisco, give California among the strictest laws in the nation limiting pollution from large ships.

"This is going to cover the entire California coastline," said state Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto. "Ocean-going vessels should not consider our coastline a place for dumping sewage."

In 2005, Simitian wrote a bill that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed banning sewage discharges in state waters from cruise ships and commercial ships larger than 300 gross tons.

That bill — the first of its kind in the nation — made it illegal for such ships to discharge oily bilge water, "gray water" from sinks and showers and other hazardous waste. But a key provision that also banned sewage releases could not legally take effect until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave permission under the federal Clean Water Act.

Although California asked the EPA for permission in 2006, the Bush administration did not act on the request.

Officials at EPA regional headquarters in San Francisco declined to comment Monday, saying they would wait until the formal announcement later this week.

But people familiar with the new rule said it will add legal clarity to the state law, so that if a ship did discharge sewage close to shore,

See **CRUISE**, Page 7

Cruise

Continued from Page 1

its owner could not claim it was immune from penalties because the EPA had yet to act.

"This is a giant step in the protection of our coastal waters," said Teri Shore, program director at Turtle Island Restoration Network in San Francisco.

Industry officials said they already are complying with the state law.

"EPA has discussed it in general with us, and we said that if it follows the provisions in the Simitian statutes I don't think it should be a problem for us," said John Berge, vice president of the Pacific Mer-

chant Shipping Association in San Francisco.

The association opposed Simitian's bill but withdrew opposition when a provision was inserted allowing older ships without the capacity to hold treated sewage to discharge it in state waters.

Cruise lines said they also are following the state law.

"We don't discharge anything within California's three-mile limit," said Karen Candy, a spokeswoman for Princess Cruise Lines.

Environmentalists said the clarity from EPA is important, however.

"The cruise lines have pretty much said all along they won't dump in state waters, but there's no enforcement," Shore said.

"It's all voluntary. This

gives it the force of law."

With fears of international travel high after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, cruise ship visits to U.S. ports — particularly California stops such as Monterey, San Francisco and San Diego — grew steadily.

By 2006, there were 81 cruise ship visits to San Francisco Bay, carrying 223,000 passengers.

Although the struggling economy has reduced that trend somewhat — to 62 visits and 179,000 passengers last year — the level remains more than double the pre-Sept. 11 numbers.

"Cruise ships have 3,000 or 4,000 people on them. They are little cities," said Arthur Feinstein, vice chairman of the San Francisco Bay

chapter of the Sierra Club. "You can imagine the amount of sewage they put in the water. And they are only getting bigger. So I think this makes a huge difference."

In 2003, the city of Monterey banned all Crystal Cruise ships after the Crystal Harmony dumped 36,000 gallons of gray water and sewage in Monterey Bay.

Simitian said that was the impetus behind his bill.

"I remember picking up the paper and thinking, 'you gotta be kidding me,'" he said. "Their answer was 'we didn't break any rules.' I remember thinking, if this isn't against the law it ought to be."

Contact Paul Rogers at 408-920-5045.

Los Angeles Times

August 26, 2010

EPA bars discharge of sewage near coast

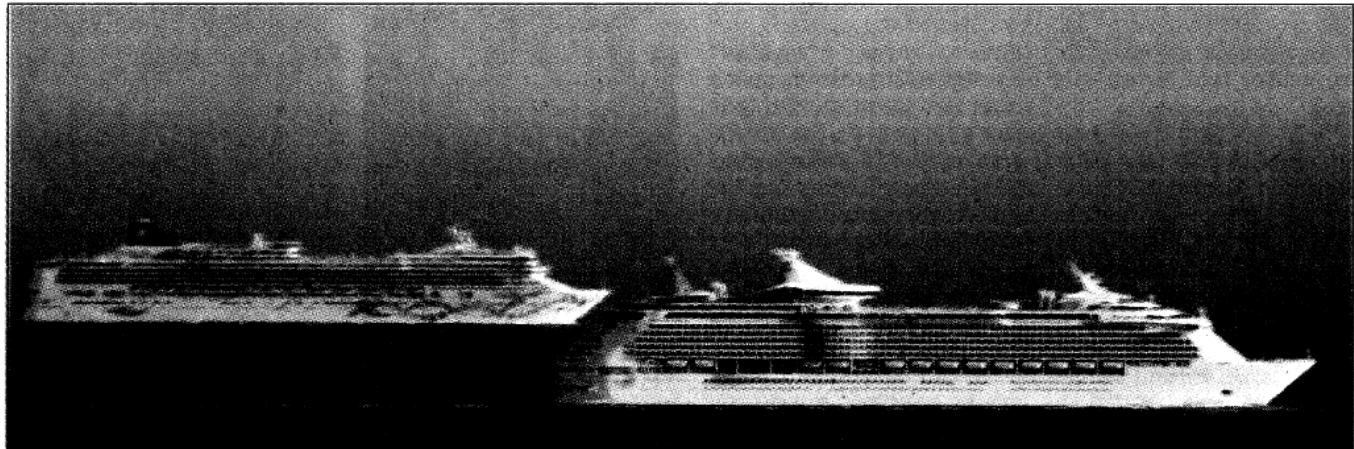
Officials say the rule will stop the release of 20 million gallons of waste each year.

KATE LINTHICUM

New federal regulations will bar cruise vessels and large commercial ships from discharging sewage within three miles of California's coastline, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Wednesday.

Officials say the new rules, which take effect next year, will amount to the nation's largest ban on sewage discharge and will keep some 20 million gallons of sewage out of coastal waters every year.

A 2005 state law bans ships from dumping hazardous substances and runoff from showers or sinks, but regulating sewage falls under federal jurisdiction. The federal ban, which applies to ships that weigh more than 300 tons, will give the U.S. Coast Guard the authority to cite vessels for vio-



BOB CHAMBERLIN Los Angeles Times

'FLOATING CITIES': Two cruise ships sail off San Pedro. The federal ban, which applies to ships that weigh more than 300 tons, will give the U.S. Coast Guard the authority to cite vessels for violations.

lations.

"We now have the benefit of a rigorous state law and federal enforcement," said State Sen. Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), who wrote the California law and asked the EPA to establish the sewage discharge ban in 2006.

Simitian said the sewage ban will go far to keep cruise ships, which he called "floating cities," from contaminating coastal waters.

"Ask yourself whether you'd like to have a commu-

nity of three or four thousand people dumping their waste on your doorstep," he said.

But the nation's largest association of cruise lines said the ban won't affect its vessels because the ships already follow a non-discharge policy as stringent as the federal ban.

"It will have no impact on our members," said Michael Crye, of the Cruise Line International Assn.

Crye said major cruise

lines operating off the coast of California have not discharged sewage within three miles of the coast ever since the state passed the latest contamination law in 2005.

Instead, he said, ships store the sewage in large holding tanks until it is discharged at municipal wastewater treatment facilities or eventually emptied offshore.

California has nine small no-discharge zones.

Under the Clean Water Act, states may ask the EPA

to establish no-discharge zones to protect and restore water quality.

The EPA's announcement is the latest in the effort to regulate the \$40-billion cruise industry. Last month, President Obama signed a law that mandates reporting of crimes at sea, improves ship safety and requires ship staff training on collecting assault evidence.

kate.linthicum
@latimes.com

San Jose Mercury News

February 10, 2012

OCEAN POLLUTION REGULATION

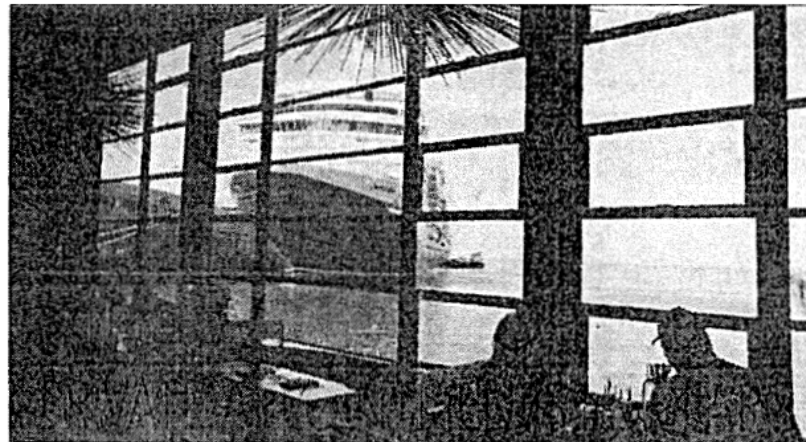
Law banning cruise ship dumping cleared

By Paul Rogers

progers@mercurynews.com

The Obama administration announced Thursday it has finalized the paperwork needed to allow a California law to take effect that bans sewage dumping by cruise ships in state waters out to three miles from the coast.

The ban grew out of a bill by state Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, which was signed into law in 2004 by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. The rules needed approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, however, and the Bush administration



ERIC RISBERG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Queen Elizabeth is docked in San Francisco.

never acted on them.

In August 2010, the EPA announced it would approve the rules, giving California

the strictest ocean pollution regulations for cruise ships in the nation. But because of federal rules requiring

comment periods and public hearings, the action finalizing the rule, a signature by regional EPA administrator Jared Blumenfeld of San Francisco, did not take place until Thursday.

EPA estimates that the rule, which also affects cargo vessels and other large ships, will prohibit the discharge of over 22 million gallons of treated sewage from large ships in California marine waters each year.

"This is a great day for the California coast, which is far too precious a resource to be used as a dumping ground," Simitian said.