

Surfrider victorious as legislature passes Clean Ocean Act

Environment News

Surfrider Wins Major Victory as Legislature Passes Clean Ocean Act

Surfersvillage Global Surf News, 1 May, 2008 : - - After a three-year campaign, the Clean Ocean Act (HB897 and SB1094), passed with tremendous support. In so doing, the Surfrider Foundation's Florida chapters have achieved a major milestone in their mission to preserving the diversity and ecological integrity of Florida's coastal environment and healthier waters.

The law requires owners and operators of day-cruise gambling vessels to implement sewage and other wastewater pump-out systems at ports, or adopt closed-loop system technology just as the cruise ships largely have begun doing.

While restrictions in Federal Maritime Law state that Florida cannot enact legislation banning sewage dumping from these vessels when they are beyond 3 miles from the east coast and 9 miles from the west coast of the State, the bill does lay a framework in which Florida can ensure coastal consistency and petition the Federal government to extend sewage dumping restrictions into Federal waters.

Armed with definitive studies from the Pew Oceans Commission, Congressional Reporting Service, U.S. General Accounting Office, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary that vessel discharges are contributing factors to degradation of our oceans;

Senate Sponsor Mike Haridopolos (R-Indialantic) and House Sponsor Stan Mayfield (R-Vero Beach) embraced their constituents wishes for action and the need for stronger coastal stewardship. Senate and House committee meetings regarding the Clean Ocean Act showed that gambling ships having the capacity to dump 44 million gallons of partially treated grey and black water (sewage) off Florida's coast every year.

"We are elated to have the Legislature's support and would also like to thank our sponsors and co-sponsors for their tireless efforts," said Surfrider Foundation - Sebastian Inlet Chapter Chair Sebastian Aravena.

"Supporters have logged countless volunteer hours on this campaign over the last three years," said co-sponsor Representative Tony Sasso (D-Cocoa Beach), who had worked on this campaign as a Surfrider member prior to his election. "This decision was an incredible affirmation for our efforts, and a testament to the power of mobilizing grassroots activism."

The Surfrider Foundation will continue to direct its efforts till end of session this week toward similar coastal and ocean protection legislation regarding the closure of South Florida outfalls (HB7139 and SB1302) and also inlet and beach management (HB1427 and SB1672).

Additional information about the [Clean Oceans Act](#)

About the Surfrider Foundation

The Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's oceans, waves and beaches. Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers in Malibu, California, the Surfrider Foundation now maintains over 50,000 members and 80 chapters worldwide. .

www.surfrider.org

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