

PRESS RELEASE

ALASKA  **MAJORITY SENATE**

SENATOR BERT STEDMAN

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Senate Passes Bill to Protect Coastal Economies, Save Public Funds

JUNEAU – The Alaska State Senate passed a bill today to protect jobs in coastal communities of Alaska and save the state millions of dollars. The bill passed by a vote of 16 to 2.

[SB 3](#), sponsored by Sen. Bert Stedman (R-Sitka), allows small cruise ships and state ferries to continue to discharge treated wastewater under the Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) approved best management practice plans. The bill also waives the one percent for art requirement for three new Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) vessels, the two Alaska Class vessels currently being built in Ketchikan, and the proposed Tustemena replacement vessel.

“This bill is good for our economy,” said Sen. Stedman. “Private industry jobs on the smaller cruise ships and the associated shore-side businesses of coastal Alaska would also suffer if the bill doesn’t pass.”

The bill’s art funding exemption is a specific, one-time waiver of this requirement. The percent-for-art program is not being eradicated. Additionally, the art from the Taku – which has been removed from service – will be placed on the new ferries.

“The costs to the state if this bill doesn’t become law are substantial,” said Sen. Stedman. “The Department of Transportation conservatively estimates a cost of \$5 million to install Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems in the ferries, which would require a substantial renovation to old vessels and the costs could easily escalate.”

For more information, contact Senator Stedman’s Chief of Staff [Randy Ruaro](#) at (907) 465-3873.

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