



**Representative Beth Kerttula**

## **Sponsor Statement**

### **House Bill 371 Registration and Reporting by Large Marine Passenger Vessels**

House Bill 371 is a “right to know” bill. The bill will give Alaskans information about what wastes cruise ships generate and release while operating in Alaska. This information will let the state assess and maintain the long-term health of the human and natural environment of coastal Alaska at a time when the cruise ship sector of the tourism industry is growing rapidly.

In the aftermath of the Holland America and Royal Caribbean pollution violations in Southeast Alaska, it is clear that state and federal agencies are not getting the information they need to know what, how much, and where these large passenger vessels are releasing wastes off Alaska’s coast. The 1999 cruise ship air emission violations recently cited by the Environmental Protection Agency against six cruise line companies operating in Juneau, Glacier Bay, and Seward further underscore public and agency concerns about the need for routine and comprehensive reporting of all wastes generated by cruise ships operating in Alaska.

The current lack of comprehensive data creates an environment of speculative science, misinformation, uncertainty, and public distrust of government and the cruise line industry in Alaska’s coastal communities. Notwithstanding cruise line industry assurances of careful shipboard practices and its current efforts to work cooperatively with regulatory agencies, it is imperative that Alaska independently assess the waste volumes and discharge location in order to perpetuate our most valuable tourist asset - our exceptional natural environment.

HB 371 provides a mechanism to let Alaskans find out what the cruise line companies are doing with the substantial volumes of wastes generated onboard while in our state waters. Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 371.