



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
WATER

Dear Interested Volunteer,

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is gathering information on vessel discharges as a result of recent congressional legislation, S. 3298 (P.L. 110-299). This bill creates a temporary moratorium, except for ballast water, on NPDES permitting of operational discharges from commercial fishing vessels (of any length) and other non-recreational vessels of less than 79 feet. The bill also requires that EPA conduct a study of discharges of effluent from properly functioning marine engines; discharges of laundry, shower, and galley sink wastes; and other discharges incidental to the normal operation of vessels subject to the moratorium. To meet the requirements of the law, EPA is evaluating the potential effects of the discharges, including determinations of whether the discharges pose a risk to human health, welfare, or the environment, and the nature of those risks and the benefits of reducing those discharges. EPA is charged with completing the study, proposing the report for public comment, and then submitting a final report to Congress within 15 months from the bill's July 31, 2008, signature date.

It is not EPA's intent to collect data for enforcement purposes. The purposes of this study include gathering information which potentially could influence future policy or regulatory requirements. The study is not contemplated as a mechanism for pursuing individual enforcement action.

If you have any questions about the purposes and goals of this study, please contact the EPA study lead, Dr. Ryan Albert of my staff, at (202) 564-0763.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Nagle".

Deborah Nagle
Associate Division Director
Water Permits Division