



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

The Hon. N.H. Cole Simons, JP MP

Minister of the Environment

Responsibility of boaters to abide by the waste management laws and guidelines.

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Mr. Speaker, Bermuda's blue ocean waters are one of this country's most beautiful and prized asset. It is the responsibility of every citizen to care for our ocean, but today, I specifically would like to remind boaters of their responsibility under the laws with regards to maritime waste management and disposal.

Mr. Speaker, the boating public are prohibited from discharging untreated sewage into the sea within 500 metres (1,640 ft) of the nearest shore. The boating public should not discharge sewage into the enclosed marine areas of the Great Sound, Little Sound, Harrington Sound or Castle Harbour, and from January 2017, discharge into these areas will also be forbidden by law.

Thankfully, **Mr. Speaker**, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, together with input from the Marine Resources Board, has developed new guidelines that will help to protect both the environment and public, and preserve our pristine environment. These guidelines appear in a wonderful brochure that is available from the Department, is being distributed to marinas and will soon be available on the Government portal.

Mr. Speaker, it is noted that the successful implementation of these guidelines will require the installation of shore-side pump-out facilities. Pump-out facilities are being installed for all new marinas, as conditioned via the Department of Planning process, but will only come on line as they are completed. For example, five (5) pump-out stations for boats will be provided at South Basin, Dockyard as part of the America's Cup development. Many more sewage pump out stations are, however, required across Bermuda. Opportunities exist for new businesses to establish shore-based or portable pump out facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the law states that 'Any person who... pollutes or fouls any public water (including seawater), commits an offence punishable under the Water Resources Act 1975' (Section 34).

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the boating public ensure that these waste management guidelines are followed and that they remain vigilant to inappropriate activities. It is especially important to note that there is a greater health and safety risk in areas where there is a high density of boats, and a greater risk of environmental impact in relatively enclosed or shallow marine areas. Sewage discharge can cause dissolved oxygen concentrations to drop, potentially leading to fish-kills or fish die-offs. This is most noticeable over the hotter months.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important to note that Bermuda's beaches are monitored regularly by the Department of Health to the US bathing water standards, and since early 2015 have been given a clean bill of health. A range of improvements have occurred to waste management practices at restaurants in Hamilton, to the treatment processes of the Corporation of Hamilton and those of the King Edward (VII) Memorial Hospital. These improvements have led to a significant decrease in fats, oils and greases being discharged through the outfall at Hungry Bay.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to state that the boating public must take their trash home with them. Garbage receptacles near boat slips and pontoons are not designed to receive the volume of

garbage generated from day trips of multiple boaters. Furthermore, placing garbage bags adjacent to receptacles is not acceptable when the next trash pick-up day may be days away. Preserving our pristine environment is key for residents and our tourists. If no designated receptacles are located at the marina, then the boating public should take their trash home with them and segregate it as one would for household trash, according to the requirements of the Ministry of Public Works. Specifically:

- tin, aluminum and glass (TAG) shall be placed in blue bags for recycling;
- household garbage (including bilge adsorbent materials) placed in black bags for pick up twice weekly; and
- hazardous waste (such as batteries, zinc anodes, waste oils and paints) shall be taken to the Tynes Bay drop-off facility.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend that persons visit www.gov.bm/garbage-and-recycling for additional information on waste segregation and disposal and the associated legal requirements.

Mr. Speaker, it is paramount that Bermuda residents do their part in the international drive to ensure that loose plastics remain away from the ocean where the significant environmental impact and

long lasting effect is currently being realised. Producer Jo Ruxton is to be commended for the excellent and informative documentary presentation entitled “ A Plastic Ocean” at the BUEI. The audience witnessed the impact of how plastic pollution is negatively impacting the environment, ecosystems and human health.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to boat maintenance, boaters are reminded to only use compliant antifoulant paints and to avoid using paints with additives listed in the ‘Fisheries (Antifouling Paints Prohibition) Regulations 1989’. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has worked with H.M. Customs Bermuda to ensure that adsorbent materials for oils in bilge water are set at a zero (0%) percent importation duty in order to encourage their use and to help protect the environment. Boat owners are further reminded to ensure that their bilges are maintained and kept free of oily wastes that could be discharged into the ocean. The placement of fixed oil adsorbents into the bilges would minimize the risk of oil being discharged by a bilge pump.

Mr. Speaker, the public is reminded that if they notice oil pollution or contamination of the sea water, they may report it to Bermuda Radio at 297-1010 (24 hour service).

Together, we can keep Bermuda's waters beautiful, clean and safe to enjoy. Thank you **Mr. Speaker.**