

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

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The fifth annual Heal the Ocean benefit concert was held at the Coral Casino and Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara on Saturday, hoping to raise \$150,000 that would be put toward research to help document the dangers of effluence dumping in the Pacific and to help preserve the ocean.

Honorary chair of the event, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, talked about the year in review before about 1,000 guests in attendance and what it means for the environment.

"Might I just say, 2009 was a really crap-ass bust of a year," she began. "The economy tanked, we have no health-care bill yet, but there was one bright spot. My dress at the Emmys got some very good press, and might I add, Heal the Ocean had a banner year."

She described this year's undertaking as on par with anything the organization has dealt with before, including its battles with polluters. The spread of effluence dumping into coastal communities is having a significant effect on the health of beaches and people, she said, and it is becoming increasingly possible to capture the effluence before it is deposited into the ocean.

"This year is about wastewater accumulation. That's where we are, boys and girls, that's the big picture," Ms. Louis-Dreyfus said. "Wastewater recapture is the future. All we need is money, political will, science and good environmental lawyers, and of course you good people at Heal the Ocean."

Ms. Louis-Dreyfus then introduced Executive Director Hillary Hauser, who spoke at length about the threat of effluence and what the nonprofit organization was moving to do about it.

"Tonight, we are launching our next big push for a clean ocean, based on a research project we have been working on for over five years." she said. "This project focuses on



Julia Louis-Dreyfus is pictured with Heal the Ocean Executive Director Hillary Hauser at the organization's fifth annual benefit concert.

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PHOTOS

wastewater discharges into the Pacific Ocean from the Oregon border to San Diego."

The report is called the Wastewater Discharge Inventory for the state of California, she said, and its official release will likely be on Oct. 15. The report will identify all discharge along the West Coast, which accumulates up to 1.35 billion gallons of effluence every single day. According to the report, a total of 49,000 tons of solid waste is deposited into the ocean every year, which requires 493 billion gallons of freshwater every year to treat.

Heal the Ocean is also finishing a two-year study of the Montecito Sanitary District, which is tracking the discharge of effluence. UCSB scientists have tracked the discharge, which occurs 1,100 feet offshore and in 25 feet of water, to analyze the water around that area.

Ms. Hauser said this information would be the beginning of their efforts to fight effluence. Heal the Ocean is partnering with the Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation, a newly formed law group that will provide advocacy and litigation when necessary, with the aim of eliminating untreated sewage being dumped into the Pacific Ocean. The group will also be partnering with Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, which is making wastewater reclamation a focus in California.

Finally, the organization is working with local sanitary districts to secure funding to upgrade its facilities to be able to fully reclaim wastewater. Ms. Hauser said that Summerland and the Montecito Water District are ready and are beginning to integrate some of those features into their infrastructure.

"From the moment Heal the Ocean formed 11 years ago, we have felt that it is utter folly to use the ocean for the purposeful discharge of wastewater. The ocean is not



The Heal the Ocean Fundraiser was held at the Coral Casino and Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara on Saturday.



Jean-Michel Cousteau spoke at the event.

our private dumping ground. The ocean belongs to the fishes and all the creatures that live in it," Ms. Hauser concluded.

Jean-Michel Cousteau also spoke at the event, highlighting the growing dangers facing oceans.

"Today, we live in a fascinating and difficult time. But with people like Hillary, we can change and show the world what can be done."be life threatening. Pollution on beaches is causing cancer, thyroid problems and decreased sperm count in children, he added.

"My father told me, people protect what they love," Mr. Cousteau said. "We need to connect with people inTopeka, Kan., or wherever and show them that they are just as dependent on the ocean as we are. We need to be able to look in our children's eyes and say, 'I did everything I could to ensure that you had the same resources I had.' "

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