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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2009

California Ships to Reefs Announces Legislation Sponsorship

California Ships to Reefs announced today that State Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, has introduced AB 634. Through this bill, SCUBA diving is being added to a list of inherently hazardous recreational activities which may take place on public property. The activities already listed include skate boarding, horseback riding, and off road vehicle racing, among others. Participants in these activities know the risks and do so voluntarily and at their own risk. SCUBA divers acknowledge the hazardous nature of SCUBA diving every time they dive through the signing of liability waivers on dive charter boats, when getting air fills, and with organizations who set up dive activities. However, with the advent of artificial reefing, a diver will be participating in an activity at a location that has been created by a non-profit organization, on public property and approved through permits from various state organizations (Coastal Commission, Dept. of Fish and Game, etc.).

A general plan for the artificial reefs placed in California waters is to employ "permit" tags similar to those used for similar activities in Florida. A person diving on one of the reefs which California Ships to Reefs is seeking to place will purchase a dive tag (permit) and sign a liability waiver on the dive charter boat or at their dive store local to the reef. The fees from these tags will be used to maintain the necessary Aids to Navigation and mooring buoys for the reef and to offset training and other costs which may accrue to first responder agencies local to each reef. The AB634 legislation is designed to extend to the State and Local governments a legal immunity for the few divers that may choose to dive a reef on their own, without a tag and perhaps without proper equipment, preparation, or training.

Dean Rewerts, Vice-President of Reef Development for California Ships to Reefs said, "The vast majority of divers who will visit our reefs are responsible and will not try and avoid the reef tag fee or go beyond their abilities and training. We, as divers, recognize that ultimately we are responsible for our own safety. State and Local government agencies who are allowing these important reefs to be placed in their jurisdictions will, by this bill, have an inherent, permanent liability waiver for all divers."

California Ships to Reefs is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation seeking to reef surplus ships as artificial reefs, bringing diving and fishing tourism to local ports in California and enhancing the Ocean Environment. For further information, please visit the organization's website at www.californiashipstoreefs.org, or contact state Public Relations committee chairman Kevin Sullivan at (805) 551-8940.