UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Mayor Eric Alegria
City of Rancho Palos Verdes
30940 Hawthorne Boulevard
Rancho Palos Verdes, California 90275

Dear Mayor Alegria:

Thank you for your letter dated March 10, 2021 concerning the deep-water ocean disposal of DDT and progress at the Palos Verdes Shelf portion of the Montrose Chemical Corporation Superfund Site. I understand this issue is of high interest to your community, and I share your concern about the potential impacts to human health and the environment presented by legacy contamination. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to prioritize protecting the public from the most imminent threats from DDT contamination on the Palos Verdes Shelf, and we would be happy to provide an update on the status and success of this remediation effort to you and your staff at a time of your convenience. As a separate matter from Palos Verdes Shelf, we are also planning a federal and state level multi-agency meeting to discuss deep-water ocean disposal sites.

The EPA Superfund Program's work to clean up the undersea Palos Verdes Shelf portion of the Montrose Chemical Corporation Site and to protect the community from seafood potentially contaminated by DDT is ongoing. EPA is finalizing a contract to update the human health and ecological risk assessments for the Palos Verdes Shelf, which became contaminated through chemical runoff into the Pacific via sewers. Drawing upon the assessments, EPA will then evaluate the available cleanup technologies and select a final remedy for cleaning up the contamination. Throughout the cleanup process, we will continue to engage in education and outreach to protect public health in partnership with community-based organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies. This effort includes multilingual public signage and fish market inspection programs along with proactive educational work to address risks presented by DDT contamination of seafood.

Regarding the historic deep-ocean disposal sites, this situation constitutes a complex and large-scale challenge. In addition to the disposal site off Catalina recently explored by the University of California at Santa Barbara, there are thirteen other documented ocean disposal sites involving DDT and other chemicals. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of the Interior, as federal natural resource trustees, have important roles to play in characterizing and understanding the effects on the marine environment from this disposal. The EPA will convene a meeting with these federal partners and state agencies later in the spring. This multi-agency discussion will be informed by the results of a NOAA-sponsored Scripps Institution of Oceanography survey to map a portion of the area where the disposal occurred.

We understand the long history of impacts on your community stemming from contamination of the offshore marine environment. The EPA takes seriously our commitment to science and transparency, and to providing clear communication regarding next steps. Again, we are happy to schedule a meeting at your convenience to discuss the Palos Verdes Shelf issue in further detail.

If you have any questions on this matter, or would like additional information, please contact me at 415-972-3133 or via email at Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov, or refer your staff to our Congressional and Intergovernmental Liaison, Julia Giarmoleo, at 213-326-2033 or via email at Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

DEBORAH JORDAN

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Date: 2021.03.30 13:48:00 -07'00'

Deborah Jordan
Acting Regional Administrator

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