FY 2022 CONGRESSIONAL HEARING FACT SHEET
OCEAN DISPOSAL NEAR MONTROSE SUPERFUND SITE'S PALOS VERDES SHELF

BACKGROUND:

- On October 25, 2020, the Los Angeles Times published an article regarding historic deep-water ocean disposal of DDT waste by Montrose Chemical Corp. of California. The disposal site is adjacent to the undersea Palos Verdes Shelf (PV Shelf) section of the Montrose Superfund Site. The article generated heavy public interest and a call for EPA to address it as part of our Montrose Superfund cleanup work (see separate Montrose Fact Sheet).
- From the 1930s until the early 1970s, disposal of domestic, industrial, and military waste was permitted at 14 deep-water locations off the coast of Southern California. Montrose disposed of DDT-containing waste at several of these sites.
- As a separate matter from the deep-water disposal, the EPA Superfund work at PV Shelf involves the near-shore underwater area that became contaminated through chemical runoff from the Montrose plant into the Pacific Ocean via sewers. The deep-water ocean disposal sites are approximately 20 miles from PV Shelf and at a depth of around 3000 feet.
- EPA's Superfund effort to clean up PV Shelf and to protect the public – and especially vulnerable communities – from seafood potentially contaminated by DDT is proceeding apace on multiple fronts and continues to be a priority.
- Congressional Inquiries. Senator Feinstein, Congresswoman Barragan, Congressman Lieu, and Congressman Lowenthal expressed concerns regarding the human health and ecological impacts from the DDT disposed by Montrose in the deep ocean, and urged EPA to act.

KEY POINTS:

- These deep-water sites, which are separate from the Palos Verdes Shelf, were examined by state and federal agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the 1980s and 1990s. Based on recent scientific research conducted by the University of California and others, EPA believes that this issue should be examined again.
- NOAA and the Dept. of the Interior, as federal natural resource trustees, have important roles to play in comprehending the effects on the marine environment of this disposal. A Scripps Institute of Oceanography study, sponsored by NOAA, is currently underway to map a small portion of the ocean floor in the vicinity of one of the deep-water disposal sites.
- The State of California has not requested that the ocean dump sites be considered for listing as a Superfund Site on the EPA National Priorities List.

TALKING POINTS:

- Regarding the close-to-shore DDT impacts at the Palos Verdes Shelf site, while EPA develops a final cleanup plan, we are working with local partners on extensive and highly successful measures to protect the public – and, especially, vulnerable communities – from the most imminent risks presented by consumption of contaminated seafood.
- Regarding the separate deep-water disposal locations, EPA is collaborating with state and federal agencies to convene a meeting (once the NOAA and Scripps Institute study is complete) to discuss this complex challenge, as well as the state's perspective on this issue.

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Name & phone of person approving fact sheet

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