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

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

April 26, 2021

Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary
California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Southern California Ocean Disposal Sites

Dear Secretary Blumenfeld:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the legacy of DDT waste disposal at several deep-water ocean sites near Santa Catalina Island.

I am happy to meet with you on this issue, and fully agree that this situation raises significant concerns and requires close inter-agency collaboration. We have made a good start on this front, as multi-agency cooperation has already begun in earnest. As several state and federal agencies have a role to play, our continued close coordination will be crucial as we move forward. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Based on the most recent scientific research, our approach thus far in addressing this challenge has begun with a focus on assessing the legacy of waste disposal at these ocean disposal sites. To that end, in December 2020 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began discussions with leaders from the State Water Resources Control Board and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Those conversations led to two state-federal meetings this month with a wider array of agency stakeholders, to identify next steps. Those of us who initially met last December have been joined by your staff, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the US Department of the Interior (DOI). We appreciate the involvement of agency leaders from California, NOAA, and DOI as we plot out an assessment.

EPA is committed to examining and leveraging our programs and resources for this assessment, beginning with Disposal Site #2, the location northeast of Catalina that has been the focus of recent investigations, including the Scripps Institution of Oceanography survey. We hope other agencies will do the same. We are now conducting an initial review of the available historical record of disposal of acid waste containing DDT, to help add to our collective understanding of conditions at Site #2.

My staff is reviewing the State of California's requests and jurisdictional perspectives set out in your letter, all of which require thoughtful and thorough consideration. In assessing these issues, we will also work with our colleagues at NOAA.

I welcome the request to meet with you to discuss this complex situation and appropriate next steps. My staff will reach out to set up a meeting for next week.

Sincerely,

DEBORAH JORDAN

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Deborah Jordan
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Rear Admiral Nancy Hann, Deputy Director
Office of Marine and Aviation Operations
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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