

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Director Young,

As you develop the Administration's FY 2025 Budget Request, we urge you to include robust, long-term funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to continue vital characterization of the ocean dumping of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and its associated chemicals.

Beginning in 2011, researchers have been unraveling the story behind the discovery of chemical waste barrels currently littering the sea floor off the coast of Los Angeles. From the 1950's to the 1960's, millions of gallons of DDT manufacturing wastes were pumped from barges directly into the ocean waters in Southern California. DDT was developed as an insecticide during WWII but banned in 1972 due to adverse effects on the environment, wildlife, and human health. Due to slow degradation, DDT has lingered in the environment and represents an ongoing hazard today, for example accumulating in California condors and bottlenose dolphins, and contributing to a major cancer epidemic among California sea lions.

Initial characterizations of these historic dumpsites were supported through Congressionally-directed funding of \$5.6 million in FY 2022 and \$6 million in FY 2023. This funding boost has enabled detailed surveys with alarming new discoveries: 21,000 barrel-like objects, unexploded munitions and depth charges from WWII, an expanding footprint of seafloor DDT contamination, and a skeleton graveyard of nearly 60 whale carcasses. In addition to DDT, EPA has documented that from the 1930s to the early 1970s, 13 other areas off the Southern California coast were approved for dumping of military explosives, radioactive waste and various refinery byproducts — including 3 million metric tons of petroleum waste. Clearly, this issue will require a long-term focus, and dedicated, multi-year funding is needed.

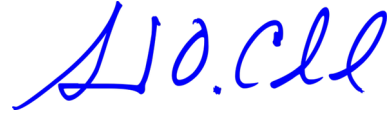
Since 2021, members of the California delegation have urged EPA and NOAA to include funding in their budget requests to address this critical problem. Dedicated funding is needed to continue to define and quantify the degradation of the marine environment, assess the health of the marine environment and living marine resources, and develop remediation methods. While initial research has focused on the San Pedro Basin, chemical dumping is an issue that affects coastal states beyond just California. A long-term program at EPA and NOAA could focus on Southern California as a pilot program to model efforts across states.

While DDT was banned more than 50 years ago, we still have only a murky picture of its potential impacts to human health, national security, and ocean ecosystems. We encourage the administration to think about the next 50 years, creating a long-term national plan within EPA and NOAA to address this toxic legacy off the coast of our communities.

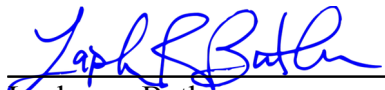
Sincerely,



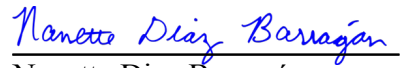
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



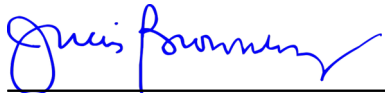
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Laphonza Butler
United States Senator



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



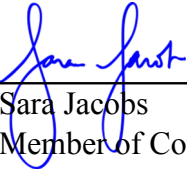
Mark DeSaulnier
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Jared Huffman
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Sara Jacobs
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Barbara Lee
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Mike Levin
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Ted W. Lieu
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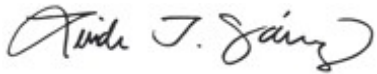
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



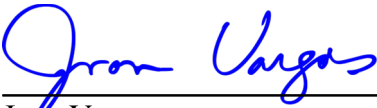
Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
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Juan Vargas
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Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

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