



ASSEMBLY MEMBER AL MURATSUCHI

66TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

1021 O STREET, SUITE 5610 ★ SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
3424 W. CARSON STREET, SUITE 450 ★ TORRANCE, CA 90505
WWW.A66.ASMDC.ORG

AB 343 (Muratsuchi, Lowenthal) – San Pedro Basin and Palos Verdes Peninsula Chemical Waste Mitigation: Public Outreach

SUMMARY

In the 430 mile stretch of coastal waters from Santa Barbara to Baja California, there are an estimated 336,000—504,000 barrels of potentially dangerous chemicals littering the ocean floor. This includes two dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) dumpsites about 10-15 miles off the coast of southern Los Angeles County that have ignited concern over the scale and magnitude of the effects of deep-sea dumping on environmental and human health. More research is needed to fully quantify the damage caused by these barrels and to adequately communicate these findings to the public.

AB 343 empowers local communities by providing the latest information on the impacts of these barrels on the ocean ecosystem and public health.

BACKGROUND

DDT was a widely used insecticide credited with eradicating malaria in the U.S. until it was banned for domestic use in 1972 for its harmful environmental effects and potentially carcinogenic effects on humans. The largest U.S. manufacturer of DDT, Montrose Chemical Corporation, produced the compound from 1947 until 1982 out of their manufacturing plant in Torrance, CA. During that time, Montrose dumped chemical byproducts from their facility directly into the Los Angeles County wastewater treatment facility, draining to the Palos Verdes Shelf, and in barrels thrown overboard off the coast of southern Los Angeles County.

A recent LA Times article¹ reinvigorated public interest in the environmental and potential human health hazards caused by discarded DDT barrels.

Additionally, U.S. Senators Feinstein and Padilla secured \$5.6 million from the federal budget for the Scripps Institute of Oceanography to study the scope and effects of the pollution. California's state budget matched these funds for "DDT cleanup" in its 2022 budget, SB 154 (Skinner, Chp. 43, Statutes of 2022).

ISSUE

Despite the health and environmental impacts of DDT waste, scientists are still determining the severity of the problem to Southern California's ocean ecosystem and human health. Local stakeholders need up to date information in tandem with this research regarding the extent to which chemical pollution impacts the fish they consume and the waters they swim in.

SOLUTION

AB 343 would bridge the knowledge gap between researchers and the general public by requiring CalEPA to hold quarterly public meetings and offer policy suggestions to the Legislature. These meetings offer an open forum for the public to hear directly from state agencies and researchers.

We can't protect our health and environment from an issue we don't fully understand. The information from these meetings would allow local stakeholders to make informed safety decisions for themselves and the communities they serve.

STAFF CONTACT

Aaron Forburger, Aaron.Forburger@asm.ca.gov

SUPPORT

Heal the Bay (sponsor)

¹ <https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-coast-ddt-dumping-ground/#nt=1col-7030col1-mainnt=00000173-4a29-dafc-a977-dabb7b330001-liA9promoSmall-1col-7030col1-main>