



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Under Secretary of Commerce**  
**for Oceans and Atmosphere**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 7, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter expressing concerns regarding DDT contamination in the ocean waters and seafloor off the coast of California. I share your concerns, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is pleased to support the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State of California, and other stakeholders, as a strategy to address this legacy pollution is developed.

In our role on the Montrose Trustee Council, NOAA, along with EPA and the State of California, is working to complete restoration within the Palos Verdes Shelf and provide technical assistance to EPA on its ongoing investigation and remediation of DDT contamination at the deep ocean disposal sites. As you referenced in your letter, NOAA was pleased to partner with Scripps Institution of Oceanography in its recent effort to map the waste barrels in varying states of decay on the ocean floor in the San Pedro Basin. This initial survey is a useful first step to develop a better understanding of the scope and distribution of DDT contamination in the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

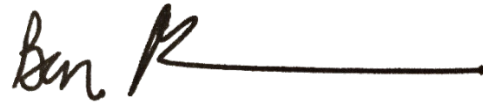
We recently were able to discuss this survey effort with Alexis Segal of your staff in a briefing led by Scripps. While the data from the research cruise is still being processed, what is clear is that there is much more to learn about the scope of the contamination, and a strategic response to addressing it will require harnessing a broad range of scientific and technical expertise. To that end, NOAA has been in close contact with the EPA, and we understand EPA will soon be convening a meeting with NOAA, the Department of the Interior, and relevant state agencies to discuss the results of the Scripps research cruise and coordinate strategically in the development of next steps. We are pleased to be an integral part of this ongoing effort, and, if it is useful to you, I will keep you and your staff informed of the scope of our continuing involvement.

THE ADMINISTRATOR



I sincerely appreciate your interest in this matter. If you have further questions, please contact Tanya Dobrzynski, Acting Director of NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-4981.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben R" followed by a long horizontal line.

Benjamin Friedman  
Deputy Under Secretary for Operations  
Performing the Duties of Under Secretary  
of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator