



Fish Contamination Education Collaborative Backgrounder

Palos Verdes Site Background

The ocean sediments off of the Los Angeles area are heavily contaminated with DDTs and PCBs from releases that occurred from the late 1940's until the 1970's into the Southern California marine environment. Los Angeles-area manufacturing plants, such as the former Montrose Chemical Corporation plant near Torrance, dumped hundreds of tons of DDTs and PCBs into the ocean near the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Although these discharges stopped about 30 years ago, more than 100 tons of DDTs and 10 tons of PCBs remain in the sea bottom sediments near Palos Verdes and in Santa Monica Bay. DDT levels in some local fish are among the highest found in food fish anywhere in the United States.

The federal government took the polluters to court and received more than \$140 million in settlements. The settlement money is being used to pay for projects, such as this educational campaign, that will help reduce the impact caused by the DDT and PCB contamination at the Palos Verdes Shelf site.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a pilot study to analyze the feasibility of capping contaminated sediments off Palos Verdes during the summer of 2000. The EPA continues evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of placing a layer of clean, sandy sediment over the existing deposit of DDT- and PCB-contaminated ocean floor sediment. The cap would be designed to prevent the DDT and PCBs in the sediment from getting into the food chain and causing adverse effects within the marine ecosystem, and posing health risks to people who might eat contaminated fish. For more information on the Palos Verdes Shelf site, visit www.epa.gov/region9/features/pvshelf.

The Fish Contamination Education Collaborative (FCEC) is an outreach and education project under the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA). For more information about the dangers of fish contamination and ways you can ensure your safety, visit www.pvsfish.org