

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2007

The Honorable Sean Connaughton, Maritime Administrator
Maritime Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Connaughton:

We have recently learned of a report commissioned by the United States Maritime Administration to analyze the degree to which paint on the ships of the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet has flaked off and settled into the sediment under the fleet. We are concerned both that your agency has had this report in its possession since February 2007 and that the findings of the report contain evidence of a growing environmental hazard to the San Francisco Bay's fragile ecosystem. We are writing to inquire how your agency intends to address the situation.

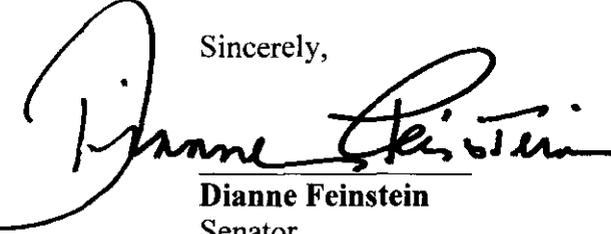
In order to better understand the present situation, we would like a full briefing on the contents of the report and a description of what further studies, if any, need to be taken to better understand the environmental impact of the Suisun fleet. It is our understanding that the report suggests that toxic concentrations near the fleet should not be interpreted to mean that the fleet is a point source for toxic metals in the Bay. To clarify the situation, please provide a detailed explanation of the Maritime Administration's assessment of the findings of the report. In addition, please explain to us how your agency has acted on the report since its completion in February.

So that we can ensure appropriate protections are in place for California's natural resources, please provide us with the Maritime Administration's plan to ensure that ships maintained at Suisun Bay are not releasing toxic materials into the Bay. If there are legislative or other resources necessary to ensure the vessels do not continue to pollute the Bay in the future, please include that information. We would also appreciate an update on the number of ships at the Suisun Bay facility that are ready to be dismantled.

Finally, we ask that your agency promptly consult with the Coast Guard and the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board and provide us with a plan for the continued disposal of the ships that meets all federal and state environmental standards.

We stand ready to work with you to help develop and implement a responsible solution to resolve this matter. We would appreciate your reply by July 9 of this year so that we can quickly assess whether further action may be required.

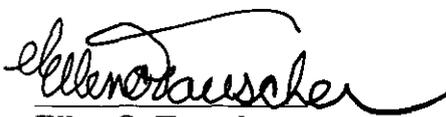
Sincerely,



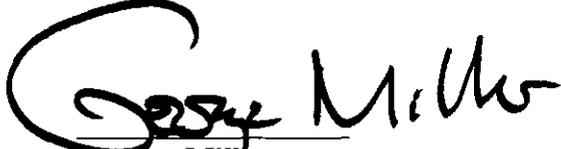
Dianne Feinstein
Senator



Barbara Boxer
Senator



Ellen O. Tauscher
Member of Congress



George Miller
Member of Congress

Cc:

Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20593

The Honorable John Muller, Chair
San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400
Oakland, CA 94612