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NEWS RELEASE



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Fishing Boat Captain Fined for Polluting Local Waters

VENTURA, Calif. – The Ventura County District Attorney's Office announced today that William Porter McHenry, a commercial fishing boat captain, has been ordered to pay fines for illegally dumping toxic waste into California waters.

McHenry owns and operates McHenry Fisheries, Inc., which runs the 67-foot commercial fishing vessel Sea Pearl. On December 6, 2024, McHenry allowed waste known as "stick water" to be dumped into the ocean. This waste can pollute the water and harm marine life. Authorities saw the Sea Pearl heading out to sea while releasing stick water, then turning back toward shore without crossing the state waters boundary line.

"This case highlights the importance of protecting our coastal waters," said Senior Deputy District Attorney Karen Wold. "Illegally dumping harmful waste threatens our marine ecosystem and the livelihoods of those who depend on it."

Stick water is created during the squid fishing process. Squid are caught using seine nets and placed in the vessel's fish hold, where they are kept in saltwater. As the squid die, they release ink containing high levels of ammonia, turning the water dark and toxic. This mixture, known as stick water, is classified as a harmful substance. After the squid are offloaded onshore, the stick water and any leftover wastewater from the offloading process are stored in the vessel's hull. Proper disposal requires it to be released at least three nautical miles offshore.



*Left: empty hold
Right: hold w/ small amount of standing "stick water"*

An investigation by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) revealed that the Sea Pearl offloaded 206,298 pounds of market squid in the Ventura Harbor before receiving back the

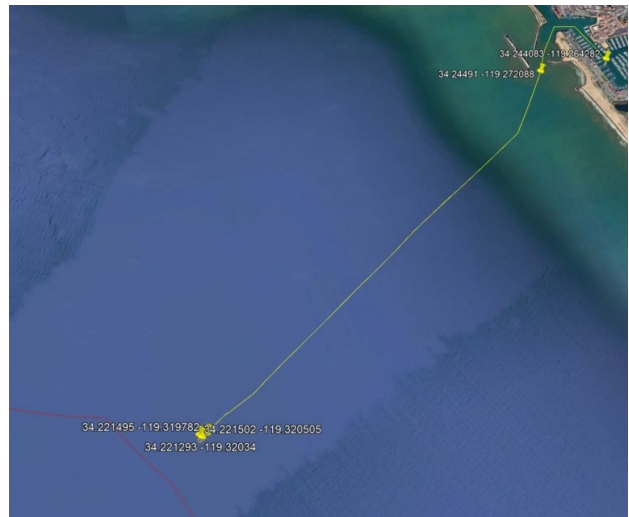
stick water from onshore tanks operated by Silver Bay Seafoods. CDFW officers observed the vessel heading past the Ventura Harbor break wall, purportedly dumping stick water before turning back toward shore without ever reaching the state waters boundary line.

A CDFW warden boarded the Sea Pearl to inspect the vessel's fish holds and commercial fishing licenses. The inspection revealed that three of the four fish holds were completely empty, with only a small amount of stick water remaining in the fourth hold. When asked to provide the vessel's most recent navigation track logs, McHenry complied, and the data confirmed that the Sea Pearl had never made it beyond the state waters border.

As part of the settlement, McHenry must pay \$8,444.69 for environmental restoration, with funds going to the Ventura County Fish and Wildlife Fund and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. He must also pay \$6,555.31 in penalties and investigation costs to the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, along with \$1,889.39 for unfair business practices.



Sea Pearl



Sea Pearl general route of travel; red line signifies state water boundary