



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



Follow us @VenturaCountyDA
vcdistrictattorney.com

Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

Approved: SW
Date: April 21, 2023
Release No.: 23-050

Settlement Reached in Illegal Disposal of Toxic Substance into Ventura Harbor

VENTURA, Calif. - The Ventura County District Attorney's Office announced today that Silver Bay Seafoods - California LLC, has entered a settlement following the illegal dumping of toxic substances into state waters.

On December 22, 2021, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) witnessed squid ink being released into Ventura Harbor. Silver Bay Seafoods, a commercial seafood processing business, was offloading squid from a fishing vessel that resulted in a large amount of squid ink wastewater, known as stick water, to be released into the harbor. Squid ink wastewater is lethal to fish and marine life due to its high concentration of ammonia. Fishing vessels are prohibited from releasing squid ink wastewater inside of state waters and are required by law to transport the wastewater three nautical miles offshore for disposal.

A second incident of illegal discharge of squid ink wastewater was discovered and documented by Ventura County District Attorney's Office Environmental Specialist Steve Mattern on January 7, 2022. Mattern observed the discharge of dark colored wastewater coming from the Silver Bay Seafoods' dock hose line in Ventura Harbor. Photos and videos taken by the Ventura County District Attorney's Office captured the unlawful release of stick water.

Under the terms of the settlement, Silver Bay Seafoods will pay \$12,500 in penalties to the Ventura County Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund and \$12,500 in penalties to the CDFW Fish and Game Preservation Fund. The Ventura County District Attorney's Office obtained \$5,000 in civil penalties and \$6,815.04 for the entirety of investigative costs. The total settlement was \$36,815.04.

Deputy District Attorney Sara Brucker, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Environmental and Consumer Protection Unit, handled the case. The \$12,500 to the Ventura County Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund will be deposited into a county fund to benefit environmental programs in our community.

Along with the monetary settlement, Silver Bay will create written protocols for stick water disposal which will require acknowledgment and signature by all employees. They will produce educational materials including a graphic illustrating the impact of stick water on sea life and will invest in upgrades to their processing equipment at the Ventura facility to safeguard from similar events happening in the future.

