

# The marine pollution

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



Ocean Dumping The practice of ocean dumping should be banned.

Marine pollution is at the heart of interest in today's search for a clean environment. Not only does ocean dumping add to the unsightliness of the once beautiful and pristine waters; it also kills the marine life which inhabits those waters. Pollution on a grand-scale is wreaking havoc on the Earth. The ocean is not an exception. In 1996, a bill, which would ban the dumping of dredge spoils in the Long Island Sound, was submitted in congress by Michael Forbes (Freedman).

At that time, Congressman Forbes predicted that all dumping in the United States would end in the foreseeable future. He sees ocean dumping ending in the 21st century (Freeman). Unfortunately, ocean dumping is the least expensive way to dispose of dredged materials and other pollutants (Freeman). Although an uphill battle, ocean dumping should be outlawed altogether. In New York City, proposed building of treatment plants was conceptualized (Murphy). This allowed an alternative to ocean dumping; since ocean court decisions and legislation (Murphy) had banned dumping.

The sludge may be transported to other states for use as fertilizer (Murphy).

Treatment plants are less of an eyesore than pollutants in the ocean.

Unfortunately, no one wants a treatment facility in "his back yard". Many miles of beaches have been closed over the years, due to ocean dumping.

For communities where beaches are tourist attractions, this causes devastating economic consequences. At one point, medical debris washed ashore (Bauman). Congress passed a law at that time that banned the dumping of sewage into the ocean (Bauman).

In 1987, an international agreement was signed and a national law was enacted to prevent ocean dumping (Miller). As late as 1995, ocean dumping continued to remain a serious threat (Miller). Tons of trash continued to pollute the nation's beaches. The trash not only threatens marine life; it also threatens the lives of humans (Miller). There was no national plan for managing vessel waste. Enforcement powers for ocean dumping is spread among several agencies. This severely hampered the situation. The Marine Conservation Volunteers scoured more than 95, 000 miles of United States coastlines on September 16, 1995 (Miller).

More than 140, 000 volunteers were involved in this campaign (Miller). In 1994, over 2. 8 million pounds of trash were picked up off of lakes, estuaries, and ocean beaches (Miller). This shows that the problem of ocean dumping is not a small one. This is a huge environmental problem. The Environmental Protection Agency should require ocean waste-management plans, in addition to those that have been created for land (Miller). Plastic particles, particularly six-pack rings, are damaging to marine animals. When ingested, plastic is harmful to marine animals.

Discarded fishing gear leads to a high mortality rate among birds, fish, turtles, whales, and dolphins (Miller). Unfortunately, humans are also at risk from this form of pollution, due to the fact that trash, which surfaces on the beach, can easily be stepped on. This garbage could (and does) contain such contaminants as syringes (Miller). In 1996, a dispute halted the dredging of shipping channels in New York and New Jersey. This allowed silt to pass into the channels and made them too small for large ships. One hundred eighty

thousand jobs were threatened, as well as \$20 billion in freight business (Bauman).

The collapse of ocean fisheries is a major environmental problem.

Environmental issues such as ocean dumping are a public concern. Ocean dumping is not only an issue of concern for America. The entire world must take a stand. International cooperation is vital for the preservation of marine life. Environmental concerns are evidenced to shape international treaties. The Montreal Protocol; the UN Summit on the Environment; agreements to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) attest to this fact (Burnett). There is a commonality in most global problems.

This commonality occurs when resources are owned by many, or when no one owns the resources. Unfortunately, self-interested behavior can lead to environmental degradation when resources, such as the ocean, are the property of several or none. No one is the protector; therefore, all should be the protectors (Burnett). Flushing untreated waste in the streams, rivers, and ultimately, the ocean, is disruptive to nature's balance. Nitrogen and phosphorus support algae blooms and thus a depletion of oxygen (Benchley). Many parts of bays are practically dead zone already. Marine life cannot survive this!

Toxic chemicals also contaminate the fish, making them inedible (Benchley). Commercial fishing is a worldwide industry. It is in decline due to ocean dumping. This growing problem affects all nations. Almost 70 percent of the world's marine fish stocks are either fully fished, over fished, depleted, or

recovering modestly. This is no small problem. Technology is increasing the number and range of the world's fishing fleet (Burnett). Ocean dumping kills off the fish that are left. Across the nation, coastal cities have routinely disposed of sewage and trash by dumping it into the ocean.

This has been happening for many years. After a while, the oceans begin to show the affect of this. It is frightening to think what dangers have yet been uncovered. Criminal charges should be enforced when anyone dumps waste into the ocean. This would help deter this activity. Illegal pollution is a crime. More people need to realize this. More laws must be made and enforced. Has anyone considered how fragile marine and coastal environments are? Has anyone considered the amount of waste that can be dumped into the ocean without causing damage.

The ocean can not indefinitely take dumping of waste without serious consequences. Oil spills are another threat to oceans. Much of the oil used in the United States is exported. Tankers do this. The increase in tanker traffic causes concern over oil spills. Birds are even affected when there is an oil spill. Marine animals die from the sludge or are trapped on land. The ocean is the place for swimmers, scuba divers, sailors and those scientists who enjoy its study. The ocean is blue. It is emerald green. It is almost black. Its beauty is unsurpassed.

Smelling the clean salt air and feeling the ocean breeze is one of the best experiences anyone can have. The ocean is home to the dolphin, tuna, porpoise, shark, whale, and octopus. Reefs of coral are found in many areas, Hawaii being one. Stories have been written about the ocean. Many have lost

their lives at sea. The ocean is deserving of much respect. It needs protection, not pollution. Sight must not be lost of the global environmental concerns. An ocean, which has been used as a dump, is a tragedy. Sight must not be lost of the global environmental concerns, which affect the ocean, its life, and its beauty.