

# Ocean Dumping of Toxics, a Newly-Recognized Potential Source of Human Carcinogens

By Charles J. McCreery

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[c.mccreery@comcast.net](mailto:c.mccreery@comcast.net)

[linkedin.com/in/charles-mccreery-626a01178](https://www.linkedin.com/in/charles-mccreery-626a01178)

## INTRODUCTION

I have reached one of the endpoints of my research regarding historic ocean dumping of chlorinated hydrocarbons, including PCBs, DDT, and dioxin. My research indicates that vast volumes of these drummed waste products were covertly ocean-dumped in 1973-1977 at up to 40 coastal ocean sites around the continental US and Great Lakes. I have concluded that these dumpsites are still open, drums have rusted, chemicals have entered the food chain and are a new-to-us potential source of human carcinogens.

The newly-formed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during the Nixon administration permitted the dumping actions and is considered to have a conflict of interest in the matter. Ocean dumping is currently not known by health professionals and cancer researchers as a potential source of human carcinogens.

The worst of these ocean dumpsites is located in the Gulf of Mexico 60 miles offshore of the Mississippi Delta in mile-deep water, where more than 1.5 million drums are believed to exist, based on ocean dumping permits released by EPA pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act request. I focus my discussion on that one site.

References for my conclusions below can be found in my report, "Ocean Dumping of Chlorinated Hydrocarbons under the Marine Protection, Research & Sanctuaries Act of 1972." <https://www.amazon.com/Report-Congress-Chlorinated-Hydrocarbons-Sanctuaries/dp/1093384557> or the abbreviated version on my LinkedIn profile.

## US HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Beginning in 1952, Shell Chemical Company (now a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell) operated a facility at Rocky Mountain Arsenal (RMA) that manufactured Agent Orange for the US Army.

The Agent Orange product was transported on rail to the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, MS, a deep-water port, where it was loaded on ships and transported to Vietnam.

The Agent Orange manufacturing process involved reacting two component herbicides with heat in a distillation vessel. Precipitate would form in the vessel, sink to the bottom where it burned and formed concentrated dioxin (TCDD) known as “still bottoms.” The still bottoms were stored at RMA for many years waiting for disposal.

Rachel Carson found the Shell Chemical Company facility at RMA in the late 1950s and discussed site conditions in Chapter 4 of her book, “Silent Spring.” President John F. Kennedy supported Carson’s findings and had his Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) produce a report, “Use of Pesticides,” dated May 15, 1963. The SAC report identified potential hazards to human health and the environment, and recommended an assessment be performed to determine the presence of pesticides in human tissues, and to determine if placental transmission occurs. This occurred six months before Kennedy’s assassination as Shell Chemical Company was planning to dump the RMA still bottoms in the Gulf of Mexico.

My report on historic ocean dumping of chlorinated hydrocarbons points to a petrochemical coup coming into the government before and during the Nixon administration, led by Shell Chemical Company, with the goals of covertly disposing dioxin in the ocean and claiming the most-valuable oil reservoir in the US. I consider these two goals and the threat posed by the SAC report as strong motive for Shell’s involvement in the JFK assassination.

It is my contention that EPA was born-captured by Shell in 1970 to help accomplish these goals. EPA made it a first order of business to plan the dumping actions by creating an inventory of pre-1970 ocean dumpsites and writing new regulations to veil the operation, the Marine Protection, Research & Sanctuaries Act of 1972.

The dumping of drummed waste at the Mississippi Canyon ocean dumpsite coincided with early remedial efforts to remove still bottoms from RMA between 1973 and 1977. The covert dumping action was also found to involve CIA, which apparently encoded dumping coordinates to obscure the actual dumping location on top of the most-valuable oil reservoir in the US, as if to stake a mineral claim. That oil reservoir was later “discovered” by Shell Oil Company (now a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell) in 1989, and continues to be developed today amid rusted drums of dioxin-contaminated still bottoms.

The “riserless” process of starting, or “spudding” a well, is to push open pipe into bottom sediments and blow the sediments out of the pipe, similar to pushing a garden hose into the ground. The space-use conflict of riserless drilling within the ocean dumpsite raised significant concerns for me about disturbing the dumpsite and introducing contaminants into the food chain.

## FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

My research did not find any recent seafood testing for dioxin by any government agency. I found that all dioxin testing of fish tissue is performed by Department of Defense (DoD) contractor laboratories at the direction of EPA, and the test is not available to the public. The World Health Organization currently lists tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and air pollution as risk factors for cancer. Ocean dumping is currently not known by health professionals and cancer researchers as a potential source of human carcinogens.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Cancer researchers should redirect their studies to evaluate the seafood supply as a potential source of human carcinogens. All seafood and fish products (including fish pellets fed to livestock) from the Gulf of Mexico should be tested for dioxin by independent laboratories. Health professionals should be instructing patients in proper preparation of seafood. Eat only lean young fish in moderation, avoid large fatty fish. Eat from the bottom of the food chain, where possible. Never eat livers or lobster tomalley. Cook thoroughly to render fat, and drain/dispose the fat (dioxin has been detected in stove hood fat drippings).

There are several aspects of the Gulf of Mexico waste site that should be addressed as soon as possible:

1. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and Royal Dutch Shell should stand down from riserless drilling within the waste site;
2. EPA and Royal Dutch Shell should characterize dioxin concentrations in seafloor sediments and suspended sediment within and surrounding the waste site;
3. EPA should address the lack of dioxin screening for seafood;
4. EPA should evaluate the food chain between the ocean dumpsite and human consumption;
5. EPA should acknowledge ocean dumping as a potential source of human carcinogens;
6. EPA should inform health professionals and epidemiologists of this potential exposure pathway for human carcinogens;

7. Royal Dutch Shell should accept responsibility for the site and establish closure bonds to guarantee eventual cleanup and closure;
8. Royal Dutch Shell should design a remediation plan to allow for a phased approach to cap portions of the site with an engineered barrier; and
9. Royal Dutch Shell could resume riserless drilling at the waste site after templates are installed through an engineered barrier to prevent mobilizing dioxin in seafloor sediments.