

BAY AREA/CALIFORNIA

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Navy Accused of Wanton Pollution of Bay

By Carl Nolte
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Two San Francisco environmental groups threatened to sue the U.S. Navy yesterday for alleged pollution of San Francisco Bay from the sewage plant and storm water system on Treasure Island.

The two groups — the San Francisco BayKeeper and ARC Ecology — said they had proof of more than 124,000 violations of the federal Clean Water Act over the past five years.

Citizens groups must serve notice on an alleged polluter before filing suit under the Clean Water Act, and the Navy now has 60 days to respond. "I expect they will comply with the law and change their practices," said Michael Lozeau, BayKeeper program director.

The Navy would not comment on the complaint. Lieutenant Commander Jacqueline Yost, public affairs officer for Naval Base San

Francisco, said the group's letter had not yet arrived. "It would be inappropriate for us to comment until we get the letter," she said.

Lozeau said the notice was sent by certified mail on Thursday.

In a press release, the two groups accused the Navy of being "one of the leading polluters of the Bay." The groups said the Navy believes it is "immune from enforcement of laws protecting San Francisco Bay and the local community (and) has turned a blind eye to the daily discharges of toxic pollutants from its storm water system on Treasure Island."

BayKeeper and ARC Ecology said the Navy has allowed excess chlorine in its treated sewage and has failed to report highly acidic discharges from its sewer plant at night.

The groups said that BayKeeper, which operates from a 26-foot fishing boat, has monitored some

of the discharges and that a sample of the plant's effluent collected by the Regional Water Quality Control Board had killed fish in a laboratory tank "in a matter of minutes."

Only yesterday, Lozeau said, he had taken the BayKeeper boat to the vicinity of the Treasure Island outfall on the north side of the island and observed a number of boats in the area fishing for halibut.

Grand Jury Opposes Contra Costa Cutbacks

The Contra Costa County grand jury recommended yesterday that planned budget cuts for criminal justice and law enforcement be scrapped and urged instead that more money be spent to increase security at courthouses and put more police on the street.

The grand jury recommended that metal detectors be installed at all public entrances to court build-

The complaint by BayKeeper is similar to an action taken by the organization against the Navy at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard last year. In that case, BayKeeper eventually sued the Navy, leading to a settlement ending the alleged pollution, Lozeau said.

In the Treasure Island case, the two groups are seeking a court order stopping the alleged pollution, not a fine, Lozeau said.

ings, that juvenile detention facilities be modernized and that the probation department be restructured so officers can spend more time on court cases and juvenile probation.

The county administrator's office has recommended decreases in financing for the sheriff's department, probation department and municipal court.

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