



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street

San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

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OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Readers:

Each year, millions of visitors to the shores of the Pacific Ocean enjoy stunning vistas, clear marine waters, abundant wildlife, and fisheries. This remarkable ecosystem and its many virtues which we enjoy and which help sustain our economy is threatened by marine debris.

One striking example floats just over the horizon in what is commonly called the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch," an area of the ocean where floating litter aggregates between Hawaii and the mainland of the United States. Much of this trash consists of small pieces of plastic that have been broken down by sunlight and wave action, and which can be deadly for wildlife that mistake the plastic for food. The vast majority of the materials in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch originate from land. This past March, we were reminded of the importance of managing and assessing ocean trash when millions of tons of debris swept into the Pacific following the tragic tsunami along the coast of Japan.

Collectively, our challenge is to produce less waste, more effectively reuse and recycle, make wiser choices in our purchases, and adopt strategies to reduce pollution. We are working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program and other partners to reduce the sources and impacts of marine debris on the nation's marine environment, natural resources, public safety, and economy.

To guide our efforts, we have developed the enclosed EPA Region 9 Marine Debris Strategy which encompasses three elements:

- reducing sources of trash and minimizing waste;
- capturing and removing trash from stormwater discharges; and
- assessing the extent and impact of micro-plastics in the ocean, including investigating potential cleanup approaches in open waters.

We each have a significant role to play as stewards of the ocean upon which we all depend. I applaud the citizen groups, industry, and governments from around the world who join us in acting on this international problem. I look forward to assessing and sharing our collective progress by the close of 2012.

Sincerely,


Jared Blumenfeld

Enclosure