

Earth Day 2023

# How Green is Terranea?

*Examining Terranea Resort's Record on the Environment*



*Issued by*

**UNITE  
HERE!  
LOCAL 11**



*"As workers who work behind the scenes have reported, the claims a resort makes about its 'green' or 'eco-friendly' practices may not always be matched by reality. This report shows why California should consider stringent oversight and regulation to ensure that large coastal resorts are following eco-friendly practices."*

**Kurt Petersen, UNITE HERE Local 11**

*"Pesticides, herbicides and plant growth regulators--especially any that can harm aquatic life--should not be used anywhere near coastal habitats. We need to be taking every measure possible to prevent the possible negative impacts of these kinds of chemicals on the environment."*

**Nico Gardner-Serna, Sunrise Movement Los Angeles**

*"It is critically important to protect our fragile coastline. Any corporate resort that has the privilege of occupying this precious area should be held to the highest standards for sustainable and responsible practices."*

**Matt Abularach-Macias, California Environmental Voters**

## **How Green is Terranea?**

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Cover photo: Trashcans at Terranea Resort (Summer 2022).

## Introduction and Summary

California's coast is the site of some of the world's most treasured and sensitive habitats. Yet portions of the coast—including some in close proximity to these habitats—are occupied by large golf resorts. This report provides information about one such resort, a sprawling hotel and golf course complex, the Terranea Resort, located along an environmentally sensitive stretch of the Pacific Ocean in Rancho Palos Verdes. The Terranea Resort prominently markets itself as "eco-friendly," using the phrases "eco-friendly" or "eco resort" numerous times on its website.<sup>1</sup> It claims that "[s]ince its inception, Terranea has remained committed to minimizing its environmental footprint by integrating transparent eco-friendly practices throughout the resort, including—but not limited to—those that protect open space, improve wildlife habitats, and enhance local water quality"<sup>2</sup> and calls itself "a model for green and eco-friendly resort development."<sup>3</sup>

This report describes a different side of the Terranea, which suggests its public claims of environmental benefits and priorities may be overstated. The Terranea markets itself as be a model of eco-friendly resort development. But a closer look at the resort's reported practices raises questions about that claim.

### *Wildlife*

It appears the Terranea's claims regarding its efforts to "improve wildlife habitats" may be undermined by a disturbing record of raccoons and other mammals being trapped at the resort by commercial trappers. The resort and golf course's operation has also coincided with a

drop in the estimated local population of a sensitive bird species dependent on coastal sage scrub, the coastal cactus wren.

### *Pesticides, Herbicides, and Plant Growth Regulators*

Data obtained through a public records request indicates that between 2017 and 2021 the Terranea—which features a nine-hole golf course—used 43 different types of pesticides, herbicides, or plant growth regulators, including one whose Safety Data Sheet states that the chemical is "[v]ery toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects."

### *Recycling, Composting, and Use of Plastics*

In contrast to the Terranea's claims implying that it recycles and composts, workers have previously reported that plastic bottles used by guests in banquet events, and other recyclable items, as well as food waste, have been discarded with the resort's ordinary garbage. Even if the waste is taken to a sorting site, the comingling of trash (especially organics) and recyclable items can result in contamination that reduces rates of recovery for recyclable products. The resort's reported use of single-use plastic beverage bottles is also inconsistent with sustainable practices.

### *Water*

Monitoring data indicates that the levels of fecal indicator bacteria found in the ocean water near the resort over the resort's decade in operation have exceeded the levels found at nearby sites. Our review of data from water samples from 2009—the year the Terranea opened—through 2019 found that the 10-

year average of fecal coliform levels found in samples at the monitoring site closest to the Terranea was 174% and 270% higher than the averages found at the two next closest sampling sites, Abalone Cove and Portuguese Bend, respectively.

### *Farm to Table?*

The Terranea has marketed containers of salt as harvested from ocean water near the resort. However, workers have reported past instances where these containers have actually been filled by Terranea personnel with wholesale salt from commercial suppliers. Worker reports also raise questions about the Terranea's promotional materials implying that guests are served the resort's own harvested "farm fresh" eggs as part of its ordinary service.

## **The Fragile Habitat Next to the Terranea**

The Terranea occupies an important and precious part of California's natural environment and habitat. The marine area around the entire Palos Verdes Peninsula is a part of the California Coastal National Monument, which is "is recognized as a unique biological treasure."<sup>4</sup> This designation, established by President Bill Clinton on January 11, 2000,<sup>5</sup> protected all lands "in the form of islands, rocks, exposed reefs, and pinnacles above mean high tide within 12 nautical miles of the shoreline of the State of California."<sup>6</sup>

As described by the executive order that created the monument: "The California Coastal National Monument is a biological treasure. The thousands of islands, rocks, exposed reefs,

and pinnacles are part of the nearshore ocean zone that begins just off shore and ends at the boundary between the continental shelf and continental slope. Waters of this zone are rich in nutrients from upwelling currents and freshwater inflows, supporting a rich array of habitats and organisms. Productive oceanographic factors, such as major ocean currents, stimulate critical biological productivity and diversity in both nearshore and offshore ocean waters."<sup>7</sup> In particular, the exposed reef of Abalone Cove is a "focal point for habitat preservation" within the California Coastal National Monument.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the Terranea Resort is next to two Marine Protected Areas, which are marine managed areas where marine or estuarine waters are set aside primarily to protect or conserve marine life and associated habitats. These are Point Vicente and Abalone Cove, both of which have been designated as State Marine Conservation Areas (SMCAs).<sup>9</sup> Point Vicente was adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission in 2012 as a No-Take SMCA, where commercial and recreational take is prohibited.<sup>10</sup> Abalone Cove was designated as an SMCA by the Commission the same year.<sup>11</sup>

State-designated Marine Protected Areas are "named, discrete geographic marine or estuarine areas designed to protect or conserve marine life and habitat."<sup>12</sup> Point Vicente and Abalone Cove were proposed and adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission as Marine Protected Areas because the Commission found that the area they occupy is the only true south-facing headland on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and the area captures key habitats across a broad range of depths.<sup>13</sup>

Occupying 102 acres along the coast, the Terranea is by far the largest private employer in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes,<sup>14</sup> employing 608 people during 2020-2021.<sup>15</sup> It is the only resort in Rancho Palos Verdes.

## **Examining Terranea's Environmental Record**

This section examines the Terranea's operations. It is based on public records and other documents and information provided by whistleblower employees and former employees of the Terranea. Note that this report does not purport to address every potential issue or to address each issue covered comprehensively or conclusively. We present below information that we have been able to develop in five key areas: wildlife protection; pesticides, herbicides, and growth regulators; recycling, composting, and the use of plastics; water quality; and purported "farm to table" green practices.

### *Wildlife Protection*

#### **Trapping Mammals: Raccoons, Skunks, Opossums, and Squirrels**

As noted, the Terranea's website states that it has "eco-friendly" practices that "improve wildlife habitats"<sup>16</sup> and that it has "made every effort to protect the area's natural ecosystem and further enhanced the biodiversity of the habitat."<sup>17</sup>

But animal trapping records show that numerous mammals have previously been

trapped on the grounds of the Terranea Resort by commercial wildlife control companies. According to these records, 70 raccoons were trapped on Terranea property, including 3 mother raccoons and their babies, between January 31, 2015 and December 17, 2017. While the number of baby raccoons removed in each instance is not readily clear from the trapping records, the fact that the resort was charged \$400 for each of the three family raccoon evictions with a price of \$75 per raccoon suggests that multiple raccoon babies may have been removed during the family trappings.

The trapping of raccoons raises several concerns. First, under California law, raccoons are considered "furbearing mammals,"<sup>18</sup> a category that triggers regulations concerning animal trapping. Most important, a furbearing mammal trapped by a trapper engaged in nuisance wildlife control measures "must be immediately killed or released."<sup>19</sup> While we do not know what happened to each of these raccoons and their offspring, there would seem to be little reason for the Terranea to go to the trouble of having the racoons trapped only to immediately release them at the resort or just outside of it. And even if some of the animals were relocated to other locations, relocation to unfamiliar and confusing terrain can harm animals and reduce their likelihood of survival, as In Defense of Animals has pointed out in raising alarm about Terranea's animal trapping practices.<sup>20</sup>

Second, the number of raccoons that were trapped raises a question of what could have caused raccoons to be present on the property. According to workers' reports, it appears that

one potential explanation may have been waste at the property that could be a source of food for raccoons.<sup>21</sup> One former Terranea worker who was laid off in 2020 recounted:

*I have also seen an issue where outdoor event trash is left out in the open, and animals like raccoons and squirrels can easily access it. When a night event is over and sanitation comes around to clean up the trash, I have seen it strewn about and overflowing. You can tell that raccoons have been through it, because the trash is scattered everywhere, far from the trash can.*

Another Terranea worker described a similar pattern, suggesting that trash often accumulated because dumpsters were full:

*For a long time, I saw raccoons around the different trash areas every single day. Sometimes I saw them near the loading dock, and sometimes I saw them at the trash cans around the rest of the property. I would find them everywhere. Every time we left trash on the ground, which we had to do because the dumpsters were full, the raccoons were at the trash, looking for an opportunity. The raccoons were not afraid of people at all, they would stand up to you. If you were passing by or tried to scare them away, they would not run. They would stand on their back feet with their front feet up as if they were ready to fight you.*

Yet another worker, who said he saw raccoons almost every day when he arrived at work in the morning, described two occasions—the

most recent in 2018—when raccoons got into his car. He said he reported the problem with his car to management but they did not address it. Another worker interviewed in 2022 recounted: “Once, about four years ago, I was serving dessert at an event at night, a raccoon climbed a tree near where I was working and it just would not leave. I had to throw a bottle of Tapatio salsa at it to get it to leave me alone.”

The issue of animal trapping has not been isolated to raccoons. According to the animal trapping records we have reviewed, during January 31, 2015 and December 17, 2017, 25 opossums and 7 skunks were trapped on Terranea property. Both opossums and skunks are “nongame animals” under California law.<sup>22</sup> As with furbearing mammals such as raccoons, “nongame mammals that are legal to trap must be immediately killed or released.”<sup>23</sup> As noted with respect to raccoons, there would seem to be little point to trapping the animals if one were to immediately release them at the resort or immediately nearby.<sup>24</sup> Finally, during the same period of time two squirrels were trapped on Terranea property.

These prior trapping reports raise questions as to whether the Terranea has continued to trap animals at its resort and whether the Terranea’s pest control and wildlife management practices are truly eco-friendly.

### Sensitive Bird Population: Cactus Wren

As the resort has acknowledged, native bird populations inhabit the area surrounding the Terranea. The Terranea has stated: “The Long Point promontory where Terranea resides is

also home to the inimitable California coastal sage scrub habitat, the natural home of many local protected species. Terranea made every effort to protect the area’s natural ecosystem and further enhanced the biodiversity of the habitat.”<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, the Terranea’s operation of the resort—by far the largest private employer in Rancho Palos Verdes—has coincided with a decline in the population of a sensitive bird species, the coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*),<sup>26</sup> which inhabits Rancho Palos Verdes. The cactus wren has been designated as a California “bird species of special concern,” a category of “at-risk” bird species meeting one or more criteria on population size and trend, range size and trend, threats, and population concentration.<sup>27</sup>

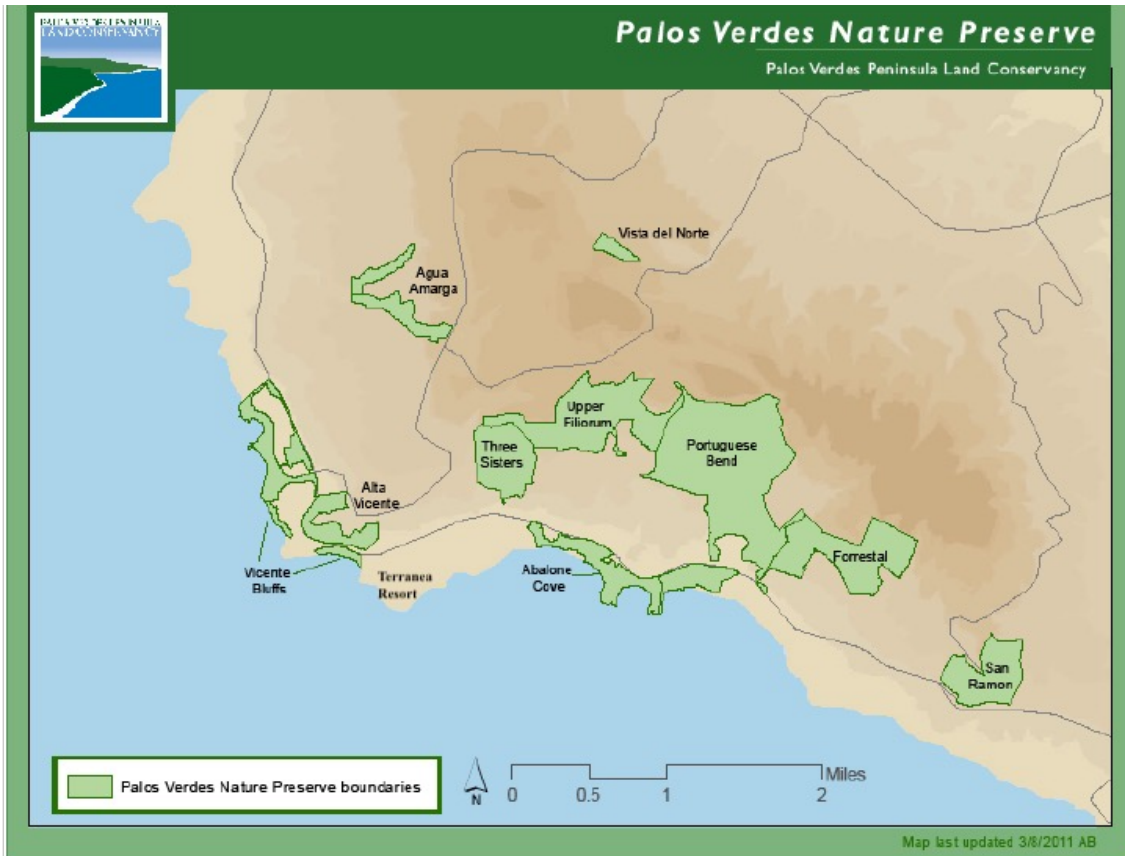


**The cactus wren.**  
**Photo source: David Mark from Pixabay.**

In 2022, a report by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC) Community Science Cactus Wren Monitoring Program observed that “over the last decade the cactus wren population of the Palos Verdes Nature

Preserve have been experiencing a decline in observed territorial breeding behavior with similar declines being expected in their actual population size.”<sup>28</sup> As reflected in the map below, the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve is comprised of several non-contiguous areas located to the west, north, and east of the Terranea Resort, with the closest areas (Alta Vicente and Vicente Bluffs) located immediately to the west and northwest of the resort.<sup>29</sup> The report also observed with respect to the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve that, “[i]n recent years the volunteer program noted an overall reduced number of cactus wren breeding territories as well as overall observations of the species.”<sup>30</sup> The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society’s Annual Christmas bird count has likewise documented a decline in observed cactus wrens, from eight cactus wren counted in 2010 to three counted in 2022, with the counts in most of the intervening years finding only one cactus wren.<sup>31</sup> PVPLC identified potential or likely causes of the declines in regional presence and nesting success of the cactus wren as invasion by non-native plant species, heightened predation pressure in urban areas, unfavorable weather conditions (drought, seasonal shifts in rainfall, and cool early spring temperatures), and human disturbance.<sup>32</sup>

According to the most recent professionally gathered detailed data we were able to review that shows population changes over time (which is from 2015),<sup>33</sup> the estimated cactus wren population in surveyed areas of Rancho Palos Verdes had fallen by roughly 50% since 2012.<sup>34</sup> The estimated species population was “much lower” in 2015, with 25 cactus wren territories compared to 48 territories in 2012.<sup>35</sup> Of note, the most precipitous drop—from



13 territories in 2012 to 5 in 2015—occurred at Alta Vicente, one of the two sites (along with Vicente Bluffs) closest to the Terranea.<sup>36</sup> According to the surveyor, Daniel S. Cooper,<sup>37</sup> the decline in the cactus wren population appeared to be “real”—meaning the change was not attributable to different efforts, survey methodology, or data analysis.<sup>38</sup> In 2022, the PVPLC Community Science Cactus Wren Monitoring Program found only three confirmed nesting sites in Alta Vicente, which it noted was among three “locations of central importance to cactus wren breeding in previous years.”<sup>39</sup>

Given these declines, it is important to investigate further whether nearby resort operations may be impacting cactus wren territories or populations. In particular, a monitoring program that regularly provides

up-to-date data about species would shed important light on any ongoing effects and whether conservation measures are being implemented effectively. It would also be important for there to be an assessment of what steps the Terranea could take to support sensitive bird populations, including such measures as planting a greater number of native plants on its property.

We also note that it has been reported that the Terranea has used falcons and hawks as a part of its seagull management program and as a recreational attraction for guests, flying the birds regularly.<sup>40</sup> One worker said, “Every day the falconer runs through the whole garden and the patios and he starts playing with the falcons.” Another worker noted: “When we have animals outside and we see seagulls around,

we call [the falconer] and then he comes over and he flies them around.” Hawks are a predator of the cactus wren and thus it is important to understand the Terranea’s practices with respect to its falcons and hawks.<sup>41</sup>

Additionally, raccoons and other medium-sized mammals are predators of another sensitive bird species that inhabits the area, the California coastal gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*).<sup>42</sup> The California gnatcatcher is a federally threatened species, a category defined under the Endangered Species Act as a species that has been identified as “likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.”<sup>43</sup> Developers have challenged the protections afforded the California coastal gnatcatcher, as it lives in coastal sage brush along in areas of prime ocean real estate, but the bird’s protected status has survived these challenges.<sup>44</sup>

As discussed above, a sufficient population of raccoons previously has been found at the Terranea in order for the resort to take abatement actions, and workers have reported that raccoons may possibly be attracted to trash produced by the Terranea. We believe that, given the fragile status of both the cactus wren and gnatcatcher populations, the use of falcons and hawks and any activity that unduly attracts raccoons cannot be considered environmentally responsible.

## *Pesticides, Herbicides, and Growth Regulators*

As reviewed above, the Terranea Resort features a nine-hole golf course called The Links. In order to gather information concerning the potential use of pesticides, herbicides, or plant growth regulators at the facility, we submitted a records request to the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner Weights & Measures Department. In response, the Department provided spreadsheets indicating that the below pesticides<sup>45</sup> have been used at Terranea Resort (organized by year). In total, at least 43 different types of pesticides, herbicides, or plant growth regulators are listed as being used from 2017 to 2021, as follows:

### 2017

AFFIRM WDG  
CHIPCO 26019 BRAND FLO FUNGICIDE  
CUTLESS MEC TURF GROWTH REGULATOR  
DACONIL WEATHER STIK  
DOCKET WS  
DORADO  
DRIVE 75 DF HERBICIDE  
DRIVE XLR8 HERBICIDE  
FUSILADE II TURF & ORNAMENTAL  
HERBICIDE  
GAME UP PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR  
PROXY GROWTH REGULATOR  
QUICKSILVER T&O HERBICIDE  
RANGER PRO HERBICIDE  
SPECTICLE FLO  
SPEED ZONE SOUTHERN BROADLEAF  
HERBICIDE FOR TURF  
TRIMMIT 2SC PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR  
TURFLAN ESTER

2018

CHIPCO 26019 FLO BRAND FUNGICIDE  
DACONIL WEATHER STIK  
DORADO  
GAME UP PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR  
GLY STAR PRO  
HERITAGE ACTION  
PROXY GROWTH REGULATOR  
QUICKSILVER T&O HERBICIDE  
SPECTICLE FLO  
SPEED ZONE SOUTHERN BROADLEAF  
HERBICIDE FOR TURF  
SUBDUE MAXX  
TALSTAR SELECT INSECTICIDE  
VELISTA

2019

CHIPCO 26019 FLO FUNGICIDE  
DACONIL WEATHER STIK  
DORADO  
FUSILADE II TURF & ORNAMENTAL  
HERBICIDE  
GAME UP PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR  
HARRELL'S PROTECTMAX T-METHYL TURF &  
ORNAMENTAL FUNGICIDE  
HERITAGE ACTION  
NUFARM T-METHYL SPC 4.5F FUNGICIDE  
PROVAUNT  
PROXY GROWTH REGULATOR  
QUICKSILVER T&O HERBICIDE  
SPEED ZONE SOUTHERN BROADLEAF  
HERBICIDE FOR TURF  
SPOTRETE F  
SUBDUE MAXX  
TARGET 6.6  
TOURNEY FUNGICIDE  
VELISTA

## 2020

DACONIL WEATHER STIK FLOWABLE  
FUNGICIDE  
DORADO  
HARRELL'S PROTECTMAX T-METHYL TURF &  
ORNAMENTAL FUNGICIDE  
PODIUM  
PROVAUNT  
PROXY GROWTH REGULATOR  
QUALI-PRO BIFENTHRIN GOLF & NURSERY  
7.9F  
QUICKSILVER T&O HERBICIDE  
RESOLUTE 4FL  
SPEEDZONE SOUTHERN EW BROADLEAF  
HERBICIDE FOR TURF  
TARGET 6.6  
VELISTA

## 2021

BRISKWAY  
DORADO  
DRIVE XLR8 HERBICIDE  
HARRELL'S PROTECTMAX CHLOROTHALONIL  
6L TURF & ORNAMENTAL FUNGICIDE  
HARRELL'S PROTECTMAX T-METHYL TURF &  
ORNAMENTAL FUNGICIDE  
LIFELINE HERBICIDE  
LONTREL TURF AND ORNAMENTAL  
MEDALLION FUNGICIDE  
OCTANE 2% SC HERBICIDE  
PODIUM  
PROXY GROWTH REGULATOR  
QUALI-PRO BIFENTHRIN GOLF & NURSERY  
7.9F  
QUALI-PRO PROPICONAZOLE 14.3  
QUALI-PRO TEBUCONAZOLE 3.6F  
QUICKSILVER T&O HERBICIDE  
RESOLUTE 4FL  
SPEEDZONE SOUTHERN EW BROADLEAF  
HERBICIDE FOR TURF  
STROBE 2L  
SUREGUARD SC HERBICIDE  
SURMISE  
TARGET 6 PLUS

While a comprehensive analysis of potential risks posed by these chemicals is beyond the scope of this report, we provide the following basic information on several of the pesticides used in 2021 at The Links golf course at the Terranea. The information concerning quantities used is drawn from the data obtained from the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner Weights & Measures Department.

## QUICKSILVER T&O HERBICIDE

The Terranea used 78 ounces of this herbicide in 2021. The herbicide's Safety Data Sheet states: "Very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects. May be harmful if swallowed. May be harmful in contact with skin."<sup>46</sup>

## PROXY GROWTH REGULATOR

The Terranea used 2.5 gallons of this plant growth regulator in February 2021. Its label's precautionary statements include the following: "Corrosive: Causes irreversible eye damage. Wear safety goggles when handling. Harmful if swallowed or absorbed through skin. Do not get in eyes or on clothing. Avoid contact with skin. Do not inhale vapors, as this product will irritate mucous membranes."<sup>47</sup>

## LONTREL TURF AND ORNAMENTAL

The Terranea used 60 ounces of this herbicide in March and May 2021. The EPA's "Environmental Hazards" section on this herbicide's label states: "Do not apply directly to water, to areas where surface water is present, or to intertidal areas below the mean high water mark. Do not contaminate water when cleaning equipment or disposing of equipment washwaters. Do not contaminate water used for irrigation or domestic purposes. Clopyralid is a chemical which can travel (seep or leach) through soil and under certain conditions contaminate groundwater which may be used for irrigation or drinking purposes."<sup>48</sup>

## LIFEINE HERBICIDE

The Terranea used 3.9 gallons of this herbicide from June to December 2021. Hazard statements under the "Emergency Overview"

section of the pesticide's Safety Data Sheet include: "Harmful in contact with skin; Toxic if inhaled; May damage fertility or the unborn child; May cause damage to organs through prolonged or repeated exposure combustible liquid."<sup>49</sup>

Given the highly sensitive ecology surrounding the resort, we believe the use of pesticides, herbicides, and plant growth regulators at the Terranea should not be considered environmentally responsible. Close monitoring and appropriate restrictions on use of these products is important to protect land and marine wildlife.

## *Recycling, Composting, and Use of Plastics*

As part of marketing itself as an "eco-resort," the Terranea highlights its recycling and composting practices.<sup>50</sup> However, some workers have reported that the Terranea has regularly discarded recyclable plastic and glass products along with its ordinary trash and that it had no composting program apparent to them. The



photographs presented in this section, all taken in June and July 2022, depict trash cans with both recyclable materials and non-recyclable refuse.

Use and discarding of plastic products occurs in the banquet department, where guests consume water and soft drinks in plastic bottles. In 2021, one longtime banquet server described:

*Imagine a banquet event with 500 people drinking plastic bottles of water, [C]oke, [D]iet [C]oke, and [R]ed [B]ull. Pretty much all of those bottles get thrown away. During coffee breaks, the banquet housemen and the servers go into the event rooms and gather up all of the refuse, including ... plastic bottles. It all goes into the same trash bags. There is no other designated place to put it. I see this every day I work. And the bottles that get taken away on Queen Mary carts along with dishes—all of that goes to where the dishwashers are and it gets thrown away in the same trash can. There is no system for recycling plastic bottles in the main department where bottles are used at the resort.*

Another report suggests that plastic and glass bottles storing ingredients in the Terranea's kitchens were also often discarded in the same containers as non-recyclable trash. One former kitchen worker called the Terranea's recycling and composting system a "disaster, which got worse over time." The worker explained that while initially there were separate bins in the kitchens for recycling, after a few years the trash and recycling were "put ... all together into the same dumpster in the end, and it didn't matter that we had separated it out." Then, according to the worker, a few years ago, the Terranea stopped providing separate recycling bins in the kitchens.



Another worker agreed in 2022 that before the pandemic, "We did have bins that separated everything. .... But like right now, they just mix everything. They mix glass trash and food waste in the same can. Even if you try to separate it outside, everything just goes to one container." The worker was unsure why the practices had changed, stating that "I guess it was too hard for them. I don't know if they were short labor, I don't know why."



A different worker, a banquet server interviewed in the summer of 2022, said: “When we start everyday—they are supposed to deliver, you know, the containers to recycle everything, but now, ... they put everything together... Yea, in the same bins. No matter what, black, green or blue. They don't care. I mean they put everything.... The only thing they do care about is the cardboard.”

Yet another worker, a cook also interviewed in summer of 2022, added that, “[a]s far as recycling goes, they are not sorting anything” and “they just throw the trash in whatever containers that they have... so everything is mixed together.”



A worker quoted above stated that among the only times he has seen workers recycle was when employees “would personally collect plastic and cans and bring them in their own cars to the recycling center in exchange for cash.” He also reported that he knew of one employee serving as a “volunteer” for recycling. He has occasionally seen her take cans out of the dumpsters but observed that “there is

no way that she could be taking out all of the plastic bottles this way.”

A worker interviewed in summer 2022 also noted that management had recently swapped reusable towels used in one kitchen to single-use, disposable paper towels.

It is possible that the Terranea may be using a mixed waste processing service that separates recyclables from non-recyclables at a sorting facility, though we have been unable to verify whether this is the case. But so-called “single stream” or “dirty MWP [Mixed Waste Processing]” systems have been criticized as a poor substitute for the use of on-site sorting out of recyclable material because the practice can result in the contamination of otherwise-recyclable materials, rendering those materials impossible to recycle. Consequently, according to this criticism, “mixed-waste processing does not increase the amount of recovered material that is actually recycled, even if plenty of recyclable material flows through the mixed-waste facility every day.”<sup>51</sup> Additionally, “the lack of consumer participation can also be seen as a negative, as there are no educational opportunities and consumers are less likely to make the connection to the impacts of their consumption habits.”<sup>52</sup>

Workers also report the following practices concerning composting. The Terranea used to have a container near its dumpsters supposedly for composting with a machine in it to grind up the food waste. However, the machine apparently never worked properly and some years ago the Terranea removed it. As a banquet worker stated in August 2021, “as

far as I can tell, they are just throwing away all of the left-over banquet food into the trash. Everything from our department goes into the same two dumpsters, which are both for trash. As far as I could tell, none of it is composted.” Another worker stated, referring to the resort’s practices in 2020: “By the time I was put on lay off, all of the waste was getting disposed of into the same dumpsters. Because the dumpsters contained both recycling and trash, they were often overfilled and would sit full with rotting organic [...] waste for sometimes as long as two or three days. The smell outside was horrible.”

The practices these workers described raise multiple concerns. First, according to interviewed workers, it appears the Terranea has used single-use plastic beverages in serving banquet events. Even if some or all of these plastic products were ultimately recycled, the use of single-use plastics is not an environmentally sustainable practice. Second, worker accounts indicate that the recycling and composting practices at the resort may not match the practices that the resort boasts about on its website—for instance, it does not appear that kitchens have dedicated bins utilized for various types of recyclable products. And even if recyclable products were removed later at an off-site facility, workers have described a failure to regularly compost food products.

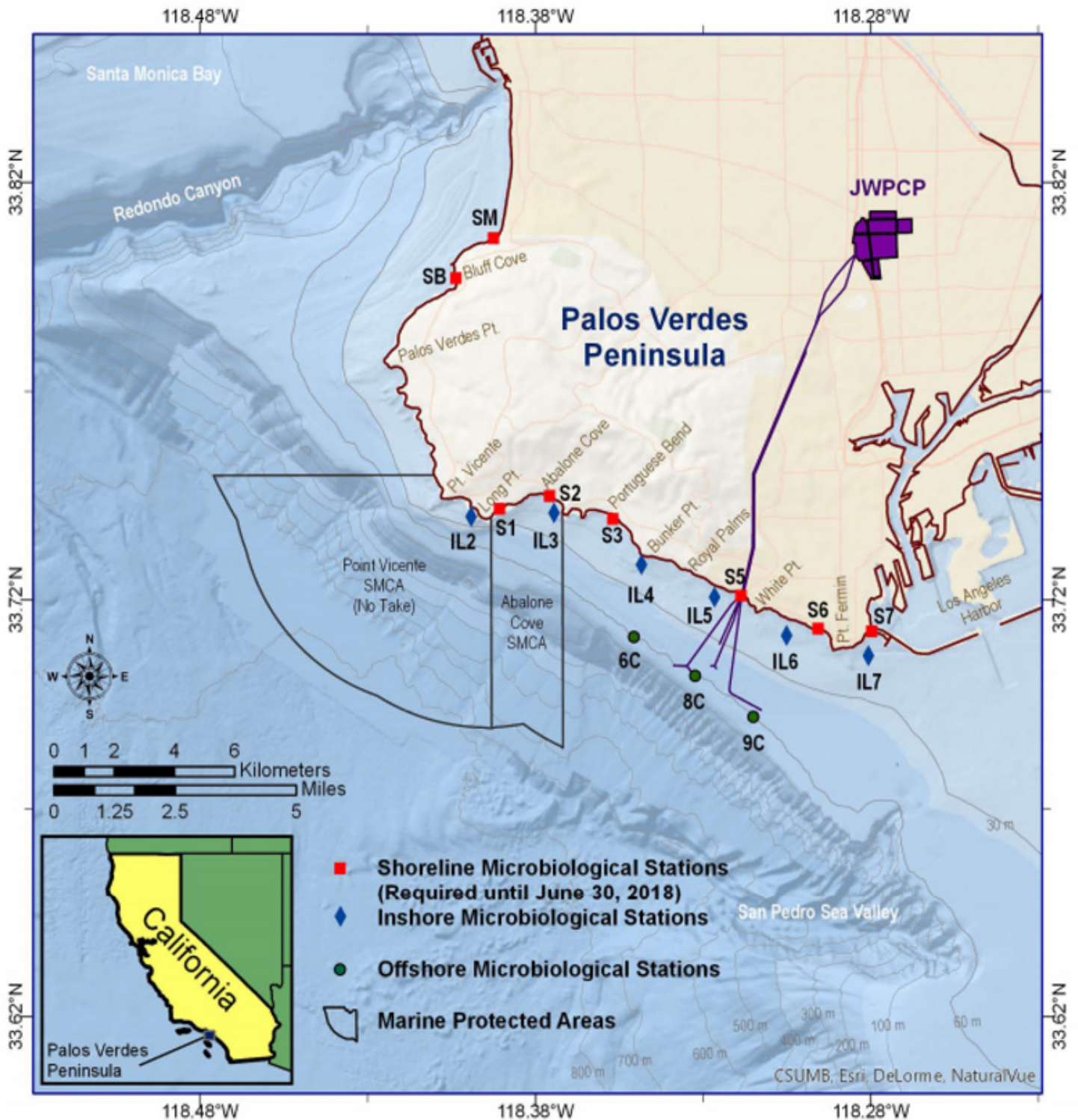
### *Local Water Quality*

The ocean water adjacent to the resort has had levels of fecal indicator bacteria that are higher than nearby testing sites and which raise questions.

Bacteria levels in the ocean water in Rancho Palos Verdes are tested as required by government agencies to help regulate municipal stormwater and non-stormwater discharges.<sup>53</sup> At these monitoring stations, the water is tested for three types of fecal indicator bacteria to determine bacteriological contamination from animal or human fecal matter: total coliform, fecal coliform, and enterococci.<sup>54</sup> Coliforms are a group of bacteria found in plant material, water, soil, and also present in the digestive tracts and feces of humans and animals.<sup>55</sup> Total coliforms is another term for the full group of coliforms, and they are indicators of possible water contamination.<sup>56</sup> Fecal coliforms are one type of coliform bacteria that are found predominantly in the digestive tracts of animals and in animal feces.<sup>57</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fecal coliform tests “are a more specific indicator of water contamination.”<sup>58</sup> Enterococci are a type of bacteria mainly found in the gut and feces of animals.<sup>59</sup> Enterococci are used as an indicator bacteria because they link water quality with contamination by human feces.<sup>60</sup> Consistent with common use, we refer in this section to coliforms and enterococci as “fecal indicator bacteria.”<sup>61</sup>

Of the bacterial monitoring stations in the Santa Monica Bay (SMB) area, the three closest to the Terranea are Long Point, which is located at the end of Terranea Way along the beach at the Terranea Resort, Abalone Cove, and Portuguese Bend Cove.<sup>62</sup> Depending on the agency, these sampling sites are referred to using the following codes: Long Point (S1 or SMB 7-3), Abalone Cove (S2 or SMB 7-4), and Portuguese Bend (S3 or SMB 7-5). The below map, created by the Los Angeles Sanitation Districts, shows

monitoring sites throughout the peninsula along with the borders of the marine protected areas.<sup>63</sup> The Long Point site at the Terranea's beach is denoted as S-1.<sup>64</sup>

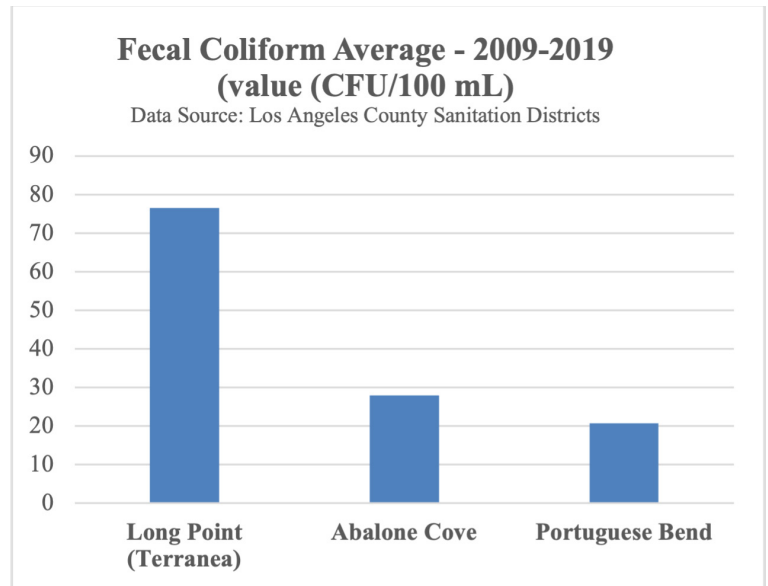


**Figure 3.1 Microbiological Sampling Sites**

Map of shoreline, inshore, and offshore fecal indicator bacteria (total coliform, fecal coliform, and enterococcus) sampling sites used for assessment of human health risk from water contact and local shellfish consumption.

## Fecal Indicator Bacteria: Average Levels

We obtained sampling data from the Los Angeles Sanitation Districts showing fecal coliform levels from 2009 through 2019 at the Terranea site (Long Point) and the two closest sites, Abalone Cove and Portuguese Bend.<sup>65</sup> Our review of this data found that the 10-year average of fecal coliform levels was higher at the Terranea site than at the two other sites. As presented in the following graph, since 2009, the year the Terranea opened, the average fecal coliform level found in samples at the Terranea site was 174% and 270% higher than Abalone Cove and Portuguese Bend levels, respectively.



During 2009-2019, the Terranea’s Long Point beach had an average sampled fecal coliform level of 76.48 CFU/100 mL, as compared to 27.87 CFU/100 mL at Abalone Cove and 20.69 CFU/100 mL at Portuguese Bend.<sup>66</sup>

## Fecal Indicator Bacteria: Days Exceeding Allowable Limits

A report issued in 2019 by the Enhanced Watershed Management Program (“EWMP”) provides additional insight into the presence of fecal indicator bacteria (specifically fecal coliform and enterococcus) in the water around the Terranea. The report reviews data for specified weather periods and shows the number of days sampled where fecal indicator bacteria levels exceeded allowable limits.<sup>67</sup> The number of “allowable exceedance days” at a particular monitoring station along the Palos Verdes Peninsula varies from none allowed per year to two allowed per year based upon the weather and the time of year: winter dry weather (November 1 – March 31), summer dry weather (April 1 through October 31), and wet weather (year-round).<sup>68</sup> These limits are reflected in the table below taken from the EWMP report.

Table 2-7: Allowable Exceedance Days<sup>(a)</sup> per Monitoring Location<sup>10</sup>

Sampling Location	Winter Dry Weather Exceedance Days Allowed <sup>(b)</sup>	Summer Dry Weather Exceedance Days Allowed <sup>(c)</sup>	Wet Weather <sup>(d)</sup> Exceedance Days Allowed <sup>(e)</sup>
SMB 7-1 (Malaga Cove)	1	0	2
SMB 7-2 (Bluff Cove)	1	0	0
SMB 7-3 (Long Point)	1	0	1
SMB 7-4 (Abalone Cove)	0	0	1
SMB 7-5 (Portuguese Bend Cove)	1	0	1

At each site, bacteria levels were sampled on a weekly basis (except in the case of exceedance events, when levels were tested the following day).<sup>69</sup> Between 2009 (when the Terranea opened) and 2015 (the most recent year of data analyzed in the EWMP report), the Terranea-adjacent Long Point (denoted as SMB 7-3) was the only location during the winter dry weather period where fecal bacteria found in the water exceeded allowable levels.<sup>70</sup> This is reflected in the below chart from the 2019 EWMP report.

**Table 2-10: Winter Dry Weather Exceedance Days SMB 7-1 thru 7-5 Compared with Reference Beach (SMB 1-1) After Final Compliance Deadline Beginning July 15, 2009.**

	SMB 7-1	SMB 7-2	SMB 7-3	SMB 7-4	SMB 7-5	Reference Beach
2009	0	0	0	0	0	2
2010	0	0	0	0	0	3
2011	0	0	1	0	0	4
2012	0	0	2	0	0	3
2013	0	0	2	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0	0	0

Indeed, as reflected in the chart, between 2009 and 2015, the Terranea’s Long Point site (SMB 7-3) was the only testing site in the Santa Monica Bay where there were any days in which fecal bacteria exceeded allowable levels. The site’s bacteria levels exceeded allowable limits for one or two days in three of seven years. The chart’s only other Santa Monica Bay sampling stations that is located on a beach—Portuguese Bend Cove (SMB 7-5)—did not have any years with non-compliance days.

For summer dry weather, between 2009 when the Terranea opened and 2015, Long Point (SMB 7-3) had the most years—three of the seven years during this period—of any bacteria sampling location on the Palos Verdes Peninsula when fecal bacteria samples exceeded allowable levels.<sup>71</sup> This is reflected in the chart below on the next page from the 2019 EWMP report. As shown, in two of the four other locations, there was only one year with days that exceeded allowable levels, and in the third—Portuguese Bend Cove (SMB 7-5)—there were only 2 years that exceeded allowable levels.

**Table 2-11: Summer Dry Weather Exceedance Days SMB 7-1 thru 7-5 Compared with Reference Beach (SMB 1-1) After Final Compliance Deadline Beginning July 15, 2006.**

	SMB 7-1	SMB 7-2	SMB 7-3	SMB 7-4	SMB 7-5	Reference Beach
2006	0	0	0	0	0	11
2007	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0	0	0	2
2009	0	0	0	0	1	0
2010	0	0	1	0	0	0
2011	2	0	0	0	2	5
2012	0	0	1	0	0	0
2013	0	1	1	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0	0	1 <sup>(a)</sup>

Finally, for wet winter weather, between 2013 and 2015, the Terranea site (Long Point, SMB 7-3) was again the only location of the five tested on the peninsula where there were any instances of fecal indicatory bacteria exceeding allowable amounts.<sup>72</sup> This was in 2015, where there were two days when bacteria levels sampled exceeded allowable limits. This is reflected in the below chart from the 2019 EWMP.

**Table 2-12: Wet Weather Exceedance Days SMB 7-1 thru 7-5 Compared with Reference Beach (SMB 1-1) After Final Compliance Deadline Beginning July 15, 2013.**

	SMB 7-1	SMB 7-2	SMB 7-3	SMB 7-4	SMB 7-5	Reference Beach
2013	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	0	0	2	0	0	1

Given the relatively higher levels of fecal indicatory bacteria and the historical exceedances at the Terranea’s Long Point Beach, it is important to investigate what problems or practices may have contributed to those levels. The 2019 EWMP report suggested that the Terranea may contribute to the bay’s bacterial levels in the following discussion of its bacteria level findings for dry weather periods:

*The rare dry weather exceedances of the bacterial objectives at SMB 7-1, 7-3, and 7-5 shown in Table 2-9 are likely attributed to natural causes, including, but not limited to: the presence of recreational swimmers, ocean debris, birds, animal carcasses (i.e. birds, marine mammals, etc.), heavy surf, increased wave height, and wind speed. **Site SMB 7-3 is also directly adjacent to the Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes, which subsequently increases the ocean users and generated pollutants.** The City of Rancho Palos Verdes has been in correspondence with the Terranea Resort to solve BMP maintenance issues onsite. Furthermore, all five sites within the Peninsula WMG are 100% in compliance with wet weather limits during the same time period. These factors suggest that the MS4 is likely not causing or contributing to dry weather exceedances. (Emphasis added.)<sup>73</sup>*



Figure 1

## Stormwater Discharge Points

The Terranea has at least two main stormwater discharge points. One discharge point is located toward the southeast portion of the resort. It is pictured in Figure 1 and Figure 2. On January 17, 2023, following significant rainfall in the area, the drain was observed discharging water into the ocean. A second large drainage point is located on top of a bluff toward the northwest portion of the Terranea property. It is pictured in Figure 3. A small amount of water was seen flowing from the drain on January 17, 2023. Additionally, there are several pipes located on a rocky area abutting the coast; these are pictured in Figure 4. (Photos taken January 2023.)



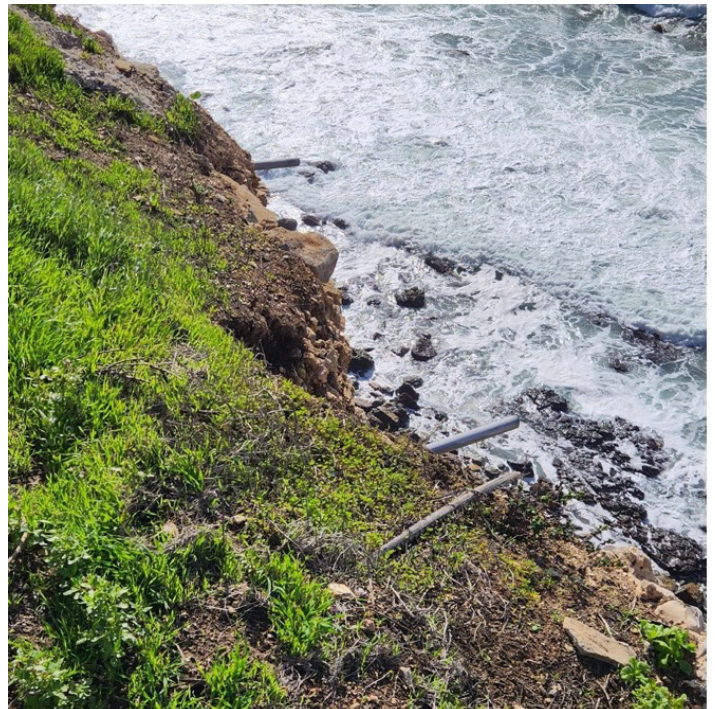
Figure 2



**Figure 3**

It was not clear from our review where the sources are for these discharge points. However, an Environmental Impact Report completed in 2001, before the property was redeveloped as the Terranea Resort, provides the following information, which appears to correspond to the discharge points describe above:

*For the RHA (resort hotel area), major surface water flows of runoff over the bluff would be eliminated, and would be discharged at two points (refer to Figure 8a, Conceptual Drainage Plan on the Hotel Resort Area Site, of Appendix 15.8, Marine Resources Report). Discharge Point I would consist of an impact stilling basin (energy dissipater) that would dissipate the energy of the flows existing from a 72 inch pipeline onto the shoreline. This would be located at the southeastern extreme of the Project area and out of the public access area. Discharge Point II would be located at*



**Figure 4**

*the southern edge near Long Point, where runoff flow from a 60-inch pipe and would be dissipated by a second impact stilling basin. These storm drains would direct storm water and runoff from the Project site and would empty the flow onto the Project area shorelines. The energy dissipaters would reduce runoff velocities and mitigate shoreline erosion/scouring, consistent with the requirements of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes and the California Coastal Commission.*

*For the UPVA [upper Point Vicente Area], drainage would continue to follow natural water courses to the ocean (refer to Figure 8b, Conceptual Drainage Plan on the Upper Point Vicente Site, of Appendix 15.8, Marine Resources Report). No improvements to these drainages are planned because there would be no increase in hydrological characteristics of the UPVA.<sup>74</sup>*

As far as we have been able to determine, the Terranea is not currently required to perform monitoring or reporting of what pollutants or waste may be present in the stormwater that it discharges to the beach and/or ocean. Implementing such monitoring and reporting is important to understanding whether the Terranea may be contributing to bacteria levels or other water quality issues in the nearby coastal waters or may need to update its best management practices or take other steps to protect coastal resources.

## Worker Reports and Concerns

We believe further investigation may also be merited into concerns that workers have expressed regarding smelling sewage at the Terranea, including determining where the smell is coming from and whether it has any relationship to the resort's practices related to sewage. In August 2021, a Terranea worker described smelling what he thought was sewage repeatedly during his decade-long tenure at the resort prior to the pandemic:

*Sometimes I would come to work through the main staircase to the employee hallway, and the smell of sewage was just unbelievable. It was so bad. The hallway smelled like this fairly often—at least twice a month. Whenever it happened, it would smell bad for two or three days. It was so bad that I had to cover my nose with my shirt in order to walk through there. There was no other way to get in and out.*

Another worker provided a statement in the same month indicating that on some days “the

smell was so awful that you would want to throw up. You would see people covering their noses and mouths with their clothes or arms in order to mask the smell as they walk through the hallway.” These workers were describing circumstances in the period prior to the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. A current worker interviewed in summer 2022 said that she experienced a “horrible smell” during 2021 or early 2022 when dirty water spread through the kitchen, potentially because there was a plumbing issue.

We have also heard a complaint about foul odors near the swimming pool close to the Terranea's Long Point Beach. A worker stated that there is, frequently and throughout the year, the smell of sewage in the area, which workers are sometimes required to use as a breakdown station.

One worker also described the Terranea's maintenance solution when sewage pipes back up: a long pipe cleaning tool that smelled like human waste and was hosed off in the loading dock area. A worker described it this way:

*I was told by an employee who cleans the drains that the smell happens because drains clog up. I have seen the engineering department workers walking through the hallway and elevators with a tool they use to clean the clogged pipes. It is made of metal, it is about eight feet long, and it looks sort of like a knife with a few bends in it. Many times, I would be in the elevator going between the underground employee hallway and the second floor, where the loading dock was, and one of these*

employees would be in the elevator with me, holding this tool that was filthy from being in sewage. They had to take it to the loading dock area to clean it. They would hose it off in the same area where we cleaned the cooking grills and banquet carts, so the sewage and wastewater would run into that same drain. It was awful, it smelled like human waste.

Aside from smelling sewage, workers have also observed other potentially concerning practices. According to worker reports, it appears the Terranea had a practice of having stewarding employees clean the grills used to cook food at outdoor banquet events in the loading dock area. The worker quoted above stated: "They would scrub down the grills and spray them with a hose, and the run-off water went into a drain in the concrete. They had to scrub off grease and oil and whatever bits of cooked food remained on the grills. As a result, that area was very greasy." This is the same location and drain where the engineers would clean the long tool they used to clean sewage pipes. Another worker added: "When we have events outside, we would use these grills. They call them evos. It's like this big round grill where they cook the meat, and at the end of the night they would clean them in that area, the loading dock. .... Every night they would clean equipment in that area."

A different worker stated that the Terranea also previously had a practice of cleaning the composting machine—which we understand is no longer in operation—in the same loading dock location.

## *"Farm-to-Table" Salt, Honey, and Eggs*

The Terranea has in recent years promoted its stated practice of making its own salt, honey, produce and other products as part of its "farm-to-table" and "ocean-to-table" program. Promotional material currently on the Terranea's website [Terranealife.com](http://Terranealife.com), for example, states the following:

*Terranea Executive Chef Bernard Ibarra takes a fresh approach to the "farm-to-table" concept. Harvesting everything from organic vegetables to sea salt and honey less than a mile from the resort at Catalina View Gardens, our culinary team prides itself on serving the freshest food of the season. Spend a day with Chef Ibarra as he harvests sea salt, procures honey from our own hives and sources the freshest produce from our gardens before passing the ingredients off to mar'sel Chef de Cuisine Andrew Vaughan to create an extraordinary seasonal menu.<sup>75</sup>*

Similarly, the hotel's website says: "Terranea's eco-friendly growing philosophy incorporates seasonal dining menus that feature local ingredients and organic, freshly picked produce and herbs from the Chef's Garden and the resort's nearby Catalina View."<sup>76</sup> As discussed below, reports from worker whistleblowers suggest that some of these claims may be overstated.

## Homemade Salt

The Terranea's claims of harvesting salt from the ocean have figured prominently in its promotional materials. A video on the website states features former Executive Chef Ibarra stating: "Making our salt is very special, because it is our salt. It makes it even more remarkable because it is so good and so pure." Ibarra continues: "We actually harvest our product and produce when we need them. And then a few hours later you have that on your plate."<sup>77</sup> Another article also states: "The facility was constructed to harvest and produce Terranea's own signature sea salt."<sup>78</sup> The resort claims that "[w]ith this exciting addition, the resort plans to become 'sea salt sustainable.'"<sup>79</sup>



The Terranea has previously made claims about its use of home-made salt in pastries the resort bakes onsite. Until 2021, a website entry entitled "FARM-TO-TERRANEA SEASONAL TREAT" stated, with respect to bake shop items like biscotti, macarons, and cupcakes, that "Each item is handcrafted using fresh herbs and

produce grown at Terranea's Catalina Garden, honey from its beehives and sea salt harvested from its Sea Salt Conservatory."<sup>80</sup>

And at Terranea's Sea Beans store, the Terranea has sold vials of Terranea-branded "SIGNATURE Sea Salt." The box for the vials include the following text: "Terranea Resort invites you to enjoy our handcrafted signature sea salt. Naturally processed into crystals, harvested from the local waters of the Pacific Ocean." Photographs of Terranea brand salt sold at Terranea's store in January 2022 are shown below.

Workers have described things differently. According to a worker report, the Terranea's



Executive Chef Bernard Ibarra initially tried to make salt by using burners in the kitchen to dehydrate ocean water, but even with the burners going around the clock, this produced only a paltry amount of salt and had the effect of making the kitchen unbearably hot for the workers. After a time, the Terranea built with

much fanfare what it calls a salt “conservatory,” a small glass house where ocean water is dehydrated on the property. But it appears the conservatory may not have yielded what the Terreanea wished to sell or use, given other practices that workers have reported since the conservatory was opened. Photos of the “conservatory” taken in July 2022—illustrating it was not being used at the time—are below.



Several current or former workers described witnessing a practice in which Terreanea cooks would take wholesale salt and place it inside

Terreanea-branded containers of the sort that have been sold at its café. One worker, who reported that the practice was ongoing when he was laid off at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, described it this way:

*I would regularly see the junior sous chef Blake at the double tables in the main kitchen near the executive chef’s office take big sacks of commercial salt containers and pour the salt over all [] the Terreanea-labeled vials in the box. There was a screen at the bottom of the box so they could re-use the salt that didn’t make it into the vials. From around 2013 or 2014 until I was laid off because of the pandemic in March 2020, I would see him filling up the Terreanea vials with commercial salt about once a month. I would often say things to him like “Is the salt from Sysco today or Costco?” He would just laugh. What could he say?*

Another worker, a banquet server interviewed in 2017, stated that he likewise saw salt containers of the sort sold at Sea Beans being filled with commercial salt. And a former pastry cook who was laid off at the start of the pandemic in 2020 stated:

*[T]he reality is that the salt that we use to bake pastries at the hotel is almost never home-made. Some of the pastries we make are biscottis, macaroons, and cupcakes. I know for certain that we almost never use sea salt from ocean water when we bake these or any other pastries because I use the salt in baking myself. The only times I have ever used the hotel’s harvested sea salt are when we make focaccia bread or items for*

*very special events when it is specifically requested. The salt we almost always use comes packaged in cardboard boxes which the company has shipped to us. Some of the salt is kosher salt. Some of it is regular table salt. But virtually none of the salt we use for pastries is salt that the hotel makes itself. It is commercial salt that the company buys.*

More recently, a worker recounted that in 2021, she saw a box of salt from a Sysco shipment come in and asked a coworker if that was the salt they were going to use for the Terranea's vials, and the coworker replied that it was. (The worker did not herself witness commercial salt allegedly being placed in vials labeled as Terranea salt.)

One worker also inferred from the small production of the "conservatory" that the salt it produced was not used as widely as the Terranea has claimed. As that worker put it: "[F]rom what I have seen over many years working at the resort, I believe there is no way that the Terranea makes anywhere close to the amount of salt that the resort uses for the food it provides to guests and that it sells ... to customers. The amount of salt they make there is tiny." The worker's belief was not that the Terranea never used salt made from its conservatory, but rather that the conservatory generates only a relatively small amount of salt and that the hotel also used commercial salt for its various products.

## Honey

The Terranea has also claimed that it maintains bee colonies at the land it rents at a nearby

farm which provide honey to the resort for cooking.<sup>81</sup> Terranea promotional materials state that: "The Terranea honeybees, or 'employ-bees' as they are affectionately called, pollinate the 4,000-square-foot Catalina View Garden, located just south of the resort in Rancho Palos Verdes."<sup>82</sup>

A current banquet server reported in 2022 that during banquet events honey would be provided "in ceramic bowls with little spoons with signs labeled 'Terranea honey' or words to that effect." However, "in those cases," the worker explained, "[former Executive] Chef Bernard directed workers to put commercial honey into bowls to serve at the buffet table for the banquet event." The worker stated: "I know it was commercial honey because I saw it came from commercial containers which I saw taken from commercial shipment boxes. I believe the brand was Sysco."

Some workers have also reported that in the past the Terranea sold or displayed jars of honey with Terranea labels. To the extent that customers understood the labels to mean the honey was provided from Terranea's beehives, worker reports raise questions as to whether that was always the case. A former cook laid off in 2020 who described watching salt vials be filled with commercial salt described a similar practice with honey:

*[L]ike with the commercial salt they would put commercial honey into Terranea-labeled jars. Blake [the employee in charge of the program] did this on the same tables where he filled the salt vials with commercial salt. I would see him take containers of*

*commercial honey that were about half a quart and pour it into the containers. Instead of pouring it over all of the jars at once, he would pour it into the containers one by one. He would also put a few little bits of honey comb into the jars, perhaps to make it look more authentic or natural. In some of the demonstrations they did, I believe they used real honey comb from the farm, so the combs in the products they sold may have been from the farm, even though the honey itself was repackaged from commercial honey containers.*

A former cook who was employed as an “intern” as part of a culinary education program in 2015 reported in 2017 that during his first few days at the site he was tasked with taking wholesale honey and honeycomb that arrived in bulk packaging and placing it in Terranea’s branded jars. The worker complained that this menial task had nothing to do with culinary training.

## Eggs

Workers have also disputed the Terranea’s claims about using its own farm-grown eggs to serve guests at the resort. The Terranea claims on its website:

*One reason breakfast at Terranea is so flavorful is our farm-fresh eggs, which come from our very own happy chickens, who lay eggs daily at our farm at Catalina View Gardens, overlooking the resort. Loved and cared for as members of our Terranea family, our feathered friends, named Parmesan and Fricassee, are ready to help you start your day at the resort off right.<sup>83</sup>*

One of the cooks laid off in 2020 at the start of the pandemic stated: “I have seen someone who works at that property offsite come into the kitchen with a basket of about 20 eggs about once a month. However, we never used these in the kitchens and I do not know what they did with these eggs. As cooks, we were not allowed to use them in the foods we made.”

A worker in one of the Terranea’s restaurants stated in 2022 that, as far as they are aware, “most of our fruits and vegetables, and some of our products like eggs, are definitely not farm-to-table. They get it from a food service called Vesta [which] go[es] all around Western states.” Nonetheless, the worker stated: “We do say it’s homemade and fresh. And ‘We made it right here. It’s all made and done here at the restaurant.’”



**Photo Taken July 2022 (sign at Terranea event)**

Similarly, a current banquet server stated in 2022 that the eggs the resort ordinarily uses are not from the Terranea’s farm, noting: “As far as I have seen, all of the eggs we have in the kitchen come packaged like they come from

commercial suppliers.” He continued: “At one recent wedding brunch in 2021, I recall that we served scrambled eggs that were labeled with a little sign that said ‘fresh eggs.’ I know that the eggs in that case were not from the farm because I saw the cooks getting eggs from [] egg cartons to cook, which [we] were directed to place out on the banquet table.” Another banquet server commented: “For banquets they use the gallons of the already processed eggs.”



Photos taken July 2022 (relating to a different Terranea dish and event)

Even a close read of the Terranea’s own promotional materials seems to support the idea that it harvests too few eggs to constitute a significant portion of the eggs it serves to guests. A video published on the Terranea’s website, [Terranealife.com](http://Terranealife.com), states that “Catalina View Gardens, overlooking Terranea Resort, is home to Terranea’s 6 chickens” (followed by a listing of each of the chicken’s names).<sup>84</sup> The video goes on to state that “The farm fresh eggs are available at Catalina kitchen, mar’sel, Nelson’s and in-room dining.” It also states that “Avocado Toast with Terranea’s farm-fresh eggs is available at catalina kitchen.” As with the other products, the workers’ reports are not that the Terranea never uses eggs it harvests from its farm, but rather that the bulk of the eggs the resort uses are from commercial sources.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

California’s coast, particularly including its Marine Protected Areas, is home to some of the most wondrous and fragile habitats in the world. It is crucial that coastal golf resorts—which make money largely by their proximity to these habitats—do not negatively impact these national treasures. As this report demonstrates with respect to the Terranea, ensuring truly responsible and sustainable practices by major coastal resorts may require more than simply accepting the claims of businesses that declare themselves to be “green” or “eco-resorts.” California should consider stringent oversight and regulation to ensure that the companies are actually following eco-friendly practices.

## Endnotes

1 See, e.g., <https://www.terranea.com/resort/sustainability>; <https://www.terranea.com/destination-earth>; <https://www.terranea.com/resort/fact-sheet>; <https://www.coral-treehospitality.com/portfolio/terranearesort>

2 <https://www.terranea.com/resort/sustainability>

3 <https://terranealife.com/underneath-terraneas-obvious-beauty-lies-model-green-sustainable-resort-development>

4 Palos Verdes Peninsula, National Bureau of Land Management, Sept. 8, 2017, <http://npshistory.com/brochures/blm/california-coastal/palos-verdes-peninsula-2018.pdf>.

5 Proclamation No. 7264 (Jan. 11, 2000).

6 *Id.* “The Federal land and interests in land reserved are encompassed in the entire 840 mile Pacific coastline.”

7 *Id.*

8 Palos Verdes Peninsula, National Bureau of Land Management, Sept. 8, 2017, <http://npshistory.com/brochures/blm/california-coastal/palos-verdes-peninsula-2018.pdf>.

9 Marine Protected Areas, Rancho Palos Verdes, <http://www.rpvca.gov/1328/Marine-Protected-Area-MPA>.

10 Point Vicente State Marine Conservation Area 2, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, (Mar. 2016), <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16128/point-vicente-smca-no-take>.

11 Abalone Cove State Marine Conversation Area 2, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Mar. 2016), [https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16125/120\\_Abalone-Cove-SMCA-Overview\\_3\\_2016](https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16125/120_Abalone-Cove-SMCA-Overview_3_2016). Species afforded protection at Abalone Cove due to its special status are “lobsters, sea urchins, rockfish, and rocky inter-tidal (tide pool) inhabitants.” Only pelagic finfish and market squid may be taken recreationally, and only swordfish, Pacific bonito, and other coastal pelagic fish species may be taken commercially. *Id.* at 1.

12 California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, MPAs

- Frequently Asked Questions, <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/FAQs#27530610-what-are-marine-protected-areas-mpas>

13 Point Vicente State Marine Conservation Area 2, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, (Mar. 2016), <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16128/point-vicente-smca-no-take>.

14 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 137, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, (June 2019), <http://rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15431/FY18-19-CAFR>. Both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, Terranea has remained the second largest employer in Rancho Palos Verdes, second only to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District. See *Id.*, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 133, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, (June 2020), <http://rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16727/FY19-20-CAFR>.

15 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 134, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, (June 30, 2021), <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18141/FY20-21-ACFR-Final>. The resort’s employment levels were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic period; during 2017-2018, the resort employed 1257 employees. *Id.*

16 *Id.*

17 <https://terranealife.com/underneath-terraneas-obvious-beauty-lies-model-green-sustainable-resort-development/>

18 Cal. Code, Fish & Game, §4000.

19 Cal. Code Regs, Title 14, §465.5(g)(1) (“Immediate Dispatch or Release. All furbearing and nongame mammals that are legal to trap must be immediately killed or released. Unless released, trapped animals shall be killed by shooting where local ordinances, landowners, and safety permit. This regulation does not prohibit employees of federal, state, or local government from using chemical euthanasia to dispatch trapped animals.”)

20 Media Release: Luxury Californian Eco-Resort Caught Illegally Trapping and Killing Wild Animals. In Defense of Animals, Jan. 28, 2020, <https://www.idausa.org/campaign/wild-animals-and-habitats/latest-news/media-release-luxury-eco-resort-caught-illegally-trapping-and-killing-wild-animals/>.

21 California Department of Fish & Wildlife Trapping License Examination Reference Guide at 147 (“There are no practical means of modifying habitat to reduce raccoon depredations, other than removing any obvious sources of food or shelter which may be attracting the raccoons to the premises.”)

22 Cal. Code, Fish & Game §4150. According to the California statutory regime, opossums and skunks are among the nongame animals that may be “taken” or trapped at any time of the year. Cal. Code, Title 14, §472.

23 Cal. Code Regs., Title 14, §465.5(g)(1) (“Immediate Dispatch or Release. All furbearing and nongame mammals that are legal to trap must be immediately killed or released. Unless released, trapped animals shall be killed by shooting where local ordinances, landowners, and safety permit. This regulation does not prohibit employees of federal, state, or local government from using chemical euthanasia to dispatch trapped animals.”)

24 Cal. Code Regs., Title 14, §465.5. See also California Department of Fish & Wildlife Trapping License Examination Reference Guide at 3 (“A trapper must either euthanize a trapped animal or release it immediately on site”), available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=84665>

25 <https://terranealife.com/underneath-terraneas-obvious-beauty-lies-model-green-sustainable-resort-development/>

26 See Daniel S. Cooper, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Survey for the California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren at 3 (2015).

27 The cactus wren was formerly a candidate for federal listing, but now it is treated as a California bird species of special concern. To be qualified as a California bird species of special concern the species must satisfy one or more criteria on population size and trend, range size and trend, threats, and population concentration. See Bird Species of Special Concern, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/SSC/Birds>.

28 Rancho Palos Verdes Land Conservancy, Community Science Coastal Cactus Wren Monitoring (2022), at 6

29 Alta Vicente Preserve is located northwest of the Terranea (see [Google Maps](#)), and Vicente Bluffs Preserve, which includes Pelican Cove Park, is located directly west of the Terranea (See <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15399/Vicente-Bluffs-Trail-Map>). A map of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve appears on page 6 of the 2015 Cooper survey; this map (with the Terranea’s location added) is reproduced on Page 8.

30 *Id.*

31 PVSF Audubon Christmas Bird Count Database, available at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13s84lfzK1yehpVsLMhOOQ5kgA5CktI1BV1s-Sz6lZBU/edit#gid=197935317>; 2022 Audubon Christmas Bird Count Summary Report

32 Rancho Palos Verdes Land Conservancy, Community Science Coastal Cactus Wren Monitoring (2022), at 6

33 Daniel S. Cooper, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Survey for the California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren (2015).

34 *Id.* at 3, 20. The “study area extended across nine reserves covering a combined 1,225 acres managed by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy.” *Id.* at 3. These areas include Vicente Bluffs to the northwest of Terranea Resort, Abalone Cove to the east of the resort, and Three Sisters among other areas to the north and northeast of the resort.

35 *Id.* at 3. Between 2009 and 2015, some sites experienced minor territory growth while others experienced declines. Vicente Bluffs had experienced substantial gnatcatcher growth from 2006 to 2009, expanding from 4 to 10 territories.

36 *Id.* at 7, 11.

37 Cooper has extensive experience with bird surveys throughout Los Angeles and Ventura County, and conducted similar target bird surveys at the Portuguese Bend Reserve in prior years for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. *Id.* at 3.

38 *Id.* at 21.

39 Rancho Palos Verdes Land Conservancy, Community Science Coastal Cactus Wren Monitoring

(2022), at 6

40 Did You Know? Terranea Resort Has Birds of Prey, Los Angeles Magazine, Mar. 14, 2019, <https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/things-to-do/did-you-know-terranea-resort-has-birds-of-prey>. The Terranea also promotes falconry on its website, stating “The Experience Concierge specializes in unforgettable indigenous recreational excursions, ranging from ocean kayaking, to tide pool treks through diverse marine habitat at the Terranea Beach Cove, and even falconry.” Terranea, Sustainability, <https://www.terranea.com/resort/sustainability>.

41 Cactus Wren Life History, The Cornell Lab, [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cactus\\_Wren/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cactus_Wren/lifehistory).

42 This is a federally threatened species. Daniel S. Cooper, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Survey for the California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren 3 (2015). A threatened species, under the Endangered Species Act, is a species that has been identified as “likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.” Endangered Species Act Overview, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies>; Cabrillo Field Notes: Welcome Back, California Gnatcatchers!, National Park Service (Mar. 26, 2017), <https://www.nps.gov/cabr/blogs/welcome-back-california-gnatcatchers.htm>.

43 See Daniel S. Cooper, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Survey for the California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren 3 (2015); Endangered Species Act Overview, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/>.

44 Court Upholds Protections for Rare California Gnatcatcher, EARTHJUSTICE (July 3, 2019), <https://earthjustice.org/news/press/2019/court-upholds-protections-for-rare-california-gnatcatcher>.

45 Food & Agriculture Code §12753(b) defines “pesticide” to include herbicides and plant regulators: “Any substance, or mixture of substances which is intended to be used for defoliating plants, regulating plant growth, or for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest[.]”

46 Safety Data Sheet for Quicksilver T&O Herbicide,

Revised 1-10-2020, Available at [https://labelsds.com/images/user\\_uploads/QuickSilver%20T&O%20SDS%201-10-20.pdf](https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/QuickSilver%20T&O%20SDS%201-10-20.pdf).

47 Label for Bayer Proxy Growth Regulator, Available at <https://www.us.envu.com/-/media/prf/unitedstates/documents/resource-library/product-labels/proxy.ashx>.

48 Label Amendment for Lontrel turf and Ornamental, Environmental Protection Agency, Available at [https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem\\_search/ppls/062719-00305-20200723.pdf](https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/ppls/062719-00305-20200723.pdf).

49 Safety Data Sheet for Lifeline Herbicide, Revised 4-30-2015, Available at <https://assets.greenbook.net/M122239.pdf>.

50 See, for example, <https://www.terranea.com/resort/sustainability> (stating that “Terranea Resort embraces a vision of decreasing energy and water usage, reducing waste, increasing recycling and composting, and purchasing local and organic food and beverages as often as possible” and that “Terranea provides bins for recycling glass, paper, plastic, and aluminum and regularly educates staff on how to properly utilize these resources through its Green Team: a dedicated volunteer team of engaged employees who support new and innovative ways to enhance Terranea’s eco-commitment”).

51 Earth 911, Mixed Feelings On Mixed Waste, Still, Jul. 12, 2006, <https://earth911.com/business-policy/mixed-waste-mixed-feelings>.

52 Green Blue, What is Mixed Waste Processing or “All In One/Dirty MRF Recycling?”, [undated blog post], [https://greenblue.org/reloop-what-is-mixed-waste-processing-or-all-in-onedirty-mrf-recycling/#:~:text=StopWaste.Org%20\(Alameda%20County%2C,%25%20at%20single%2Dstream%20MRFs](https://greenblue.org/reloop-what-is-mixed-waste-processing-or-all-in-onedirty-mrf-recycling/#:~:text=StopWaste.Org%20(Alameda%20County%2C,%25%20at%20single%2Dstream%20MRFs).

53 2018–2019 Joint Water Pollution Control Plant Biennial Receiving Water Monitoring Report 3.1–3.2, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Aug. 2020, <https://www.lacsd.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=9708>.

54 2018–2019 Joint Water Pollution Control Plant Biennial Receiving Water Monitoring Report 3.1–3.2, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Aug. 2020,

<https://www.lacsd.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=9708>. Enhanced Watershed Management Program 28, Palos Verdes Peninsula Watershed Management Group, Apr. 5, 2019, [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed\\_management/palos\\_verdes/PVP\\_EWMP\\_Revised\\_2019\\_04\\_05.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed_management/palos_verdes/PVP_EWMP_Revised_2019_04_05.pdf).

55 Frequently Asked Questions About Groundwater Rule Advisories, Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/dwa-comm-toolbox/before/tools/FAQ-groundwater-rule.docx>.

56 *Id.*

57 *Id.*

58 *Id.*

59 *Id.*

60 *Id.*

61 2018–2019 Joint Water Pollution Control Plant Biennial Receiving Water Monitoring Report 3.1–3.2, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Aug. 2020, <https://www.lacsd.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=9708>.

62 Enhanced Watershed Management Program 36, Palos Verdes Peninsula Watershed Management Group, Apr. 5, 2019, [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed\\_management/palos\\_verdes/PVP\\_EWMP\\_Revised\\_2019\\_04\\_05.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed_management/palos_verdes/PVP_EWMP_Revised_2019_04_05.pdf). Station 3 is the station immediately in front of the Terranea. *Id.* at 39.

63 2018–2019 Joint Water Pollution Control Plant Biennial Receiving Water Monitoring Report, 3.2, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Aug. 2020, <https://www.lacsd.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=9708>.

64 *Id.*

65 The shoreline samples were collected by LA Sanitation and analyzed by Joint Water Pollution Control Plant (JWPCP) Water Quality Laboratory, which has been certified by the state of California under the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP).

For details, see 2018–2019 Joint Water Pollution Control Plant Biennial Receiving Water Monitoring Report at 3.2, 3.4, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Aug. 2020, <https://www.lacsd.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=9708>.

66 This calculation includes only samples from dates when measurements taken for all three sites met minimum detection limits, as indicated by Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

67 An exceedance is defined by when a sample surpasses the defined "compliance targets" in the 100 mL water sample, as set by the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles, Technical Steering Committee: Santa Monica Bay Beaches Bacterial TMDLs Coordinated Shoreline Monitoring, pursuant to the state's obligations under the Clean Water Act of 1972. For a single sample, the limit defined for total coliform is 10,000 MPN/100 mL, the limits defined for fecal coliform is 400 MPN/mL, and the limit for enterococcus is 104 MPN/mL. Enhanced Watershed Management Program 2.13–2.14, Palos Verdes Peninsula Watershed Management Group, Apr. 5, 2019, [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed\\_management/palos\\_verdes/PVP\\_EWMP\\_Revised\\_2019\\_04\\_05.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed_management/palos_verdes/PVP_EWMP_Revised_2019_04_05.pdf). Station 3 is the station nearest the Terranea.

68 *Id.*

69 *Id.* at 2–12.

70 *Id.*

71 *Id.* at 2–17.

72 *Id.*

73 Enhanced Watershed Management Program 2–16, Palos Verdes Peninsula Watershed Management Group, Apr. 5, 2019, [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed\\_management/palos\\_verdes/PVP\\_EWMP\\_Revised\\_2019\\_04\\_05.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed_management/palos_verdes/PVP_EWMP_Revised_2019_04_05.pdf). Station 3 is the station immediately in front of the Terranea.

74 Enhanced Watershed Management Program 2–16, Palos Verdes Peninsula Watershed Management Group, Apr. 5, 2019, [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water\\_issues/programs/stormwater/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles/water_issues/programs/stormwater/)

municipal/watershed\_management/palos\_verdes/PVP\_EWMP\_Revised\_2019\_04\_05.pdf. Station 3 is the station immediately in front of the Terranea.

75 <https://terranealife.com/spend-day-chefs-harvest-farm-table/>

76 <https://www.terranea.com/resort/sustainability>

77 *Id.*

78 <https://terranealife.com/tastes-born-in-terraneas-new-sea-salt-conservatory/>

79 *Id.*

80 <https://www.terranea.com/signature-touchpoints/destination-taste> (as of January 27, 2021; record on file)

81 <https://terranealife.com/hives-terranea-make-life-much-sweeter>

82 *Id.*

83 <https://terranealife.com/best-days-start-farm-fresh-eggs>

84 *Id.*