



Settling litigation brought by environmental groups and later joined by state officials, the [US Maritime Administration has agreed](#) to remove the mothball fleet (also known as the ghost fleet) from Suisun Bay near San Francisco. The fleet consists of 52 obsolete warships that have been stored in the Bay for decades with little or no maintenance. Over time, as the paint peeled from the deteriorating ships, they have spilled tons of toxic metals into the water. In January, US District [Judge Garland Burrell ruled](#) that those discharges violate the Clean Water Act, and the accumulation of toxic paint chips on the decks of the ships violates California's hazardous waste law.

The settlement calls for the US to clean up those paint chips within the next few months, get the worst ships out of the Bay by the middle of 2012, and remove all of them by September 2017. NRDC's Michael Wall offers more details at [Switchboard](#).