

# Deal Is Reached in California Pollution Trial



By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**L**OS ANGELES, Oct. 28 (AP) A pollution trial a decade in the making has ended with the Montrose Chemical Corporation and two other companies agreeing to pay an undisclosed amount to compensate Californians for damages linked to a giant DDT deposit in the ocean off Los Angeles.

The deal was made on Friday after a week of testimony in what was one of the nation's largest and longest-standing environmental cases. The government had been seeking roughly \$150 million in damages.

Judge Manuel L. Real of United States District Court ordered that the agreement remain secret until a consent decree outlining the terms could be filed later this year.

The deal came after government witnesses testified about the effects of 24 years of contamination, and after Judge Real ruled that Montrose's leading scientific consultant did not qualify as an expert.

The nonjury trial stemmed from a lawsuit filed in 1990 over pollution caused by DDT dumping from 1947 to 1971.

Defense lawyers acknowledged the dumping of DDT into the ocean but argued that those actions were legal and did not significantly harm marine life, fishing or public health.

But the government presented testimony from biologists and geologists who described the extent of the DDT on the ocean floor and the reproductive damage to eagles and falcons.

The 100 tons of DDT are the largest known deposit in the world, and the area is on the federal Superfund list of the nation's most hazardous

chemical sites. The Environmental Protection Agency is experimenting with an operation in which tons of silt are being poured into the ocean to cover the deposit, on about 17 square miles of the ocean floor off the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

DDT, widely used in the United States until it was banned about 30 years ago, is linked to cancer and reproductive problems in humans and continues to contaminate fish and kill bald eagle chicks. Montrose was the world's largest manufacturer of the compound.

The settlement reached on Friday also involves Aventis CropScience USA Inc. and Atkemix Thirty-Seven Inc. Another defendant, Chris-Craft Industries, a 50 percent shareholder in Montrose, has not settled. Judge Real has not yet ruled whether the company is liable.