

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Director  
National Pollution Funds Center

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Arlington VA 20598-7100  
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Toll-Free: 1-800-280-7118  
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NPFCCCLAIMSINFO@uscg.mil

5890  
July 1, 2013

VIA EMAIL [REDACTED]@gmgmlaw.com

Charter Township of Van Buren  
ATTN: Mr. Christopher M. Hogg  
46425 Tyler Road  
Van Buren Township, MI 48111

RE: E11503-0001

Dear Mr. Hogg:

The National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC), in accordance with the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) (33 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.), has determined that \$18,781.19 is full compensation for OPA claim number E11503-0001.

This determination is based on an analysis of the information submitted. Please see the attached determination for further details regarding the rationale for this decision.

All costs that are not determined as compensable are considered denied. You may make a written request for reconsideration of this claim. The reconsideration must be received by the NPFC within 60 days of the date of this letter and must include the factual or legal basis of the request for reconsideration, providing any additional support for the claims. Reconsideration will be based upon the information provided and a claim may be reconsidered only once. Disposition of the reconsideration will constitute final agency action. Failure of the NPFC to issue a written decision within 90 days after receipt of a timely request for reconsideration shall, at the option of the claimant, be deemed final agency action. All correspondence should include corresponding claim number.

Mail reconsideration request to:

Director  
NPFC CA MS 7100  
US COAST GUARD  
4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1000  
Arlington, VA 20598-7100

If you accept this determination, please sign the enclosed Acceptance / Release Agreement where indicated and return to the above address.

If we do not receive the signed original Acceptance / Release Agreement within 60 days of the date of this letter, the determination is void. If the determination is accepted, an original signature and a valid tax identification number (EIN or SSN) are required for payment. If you are a Claimant that has submitted other claims to the National Pollution Funds Center, you are

required to have a valid Contractor Registration record prior to payment. If you do not, you may register free of charge at [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). Your payment will be mailed or electronically deposited in your account within 60 days of receipt of the Release Agreement.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the matter, you may contact me at the above address or by phone at 1-800-280-7118.

Sincerely,



Galen Wetzel  
Claims Manager  
U.S. Coast Guard  
By direction

Enclosures: Claim Summary / Determination  
Acceptance / Release Agreement

## CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION

<b>Claim Number:</b>	E11503-0001
<b>Claimant:</b>	Charter Township of Van Buren
<b>Type of Claimant:</b>	Local Municipality
<b>Type of Claim:</b>	Removal Costs
<b>Claim Manager:</b>	Galen Wetzel
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	\$19,277.69

### FACTS:

**Oil Spill Incident:** On November 28, 2010, the 63 foot, commercial river boat PRINCESS LAURA (MC7400NA) was found partially submerged, by the Belleville Police Department (BPD), at the public dock in Horizon Park located on High Street in the City of Belleville, Michigan (located within the Charter Township of Van Buren). The sinking of the vessel created an oil sheen on the water's surface approximately 200 feet long by 20 feet wide. The Federal On Scene Coordinator (FOSC) arrived and found that the Western Wayne County HAZMAT Response Team (WW-HMRT) was conducting emergency removal response actions in accordance with the National Contingency Plan (NCP).

On December 2, 2010, the vessel was up righted after a failed attempt on November 30, 2010. On December 6, 2010, demobilization of all equipment was completed. The FOSC concluded all emergency response removal activities were completed.

Belleville Lake, also known as Edison Lake, in Belleville, Michigan is a reservoir created by the damming of the Huron River. The Huron River is a tributary to Lake Erie, a navigable waterway of the United States.

**Responsible Party:** Ms. Linda Shaver, the Responsible Party (RP), is the registered owner of the M/V PRINCESS LAURA at the time of the incident and is determined to be the responsible party under the Oil Pollution Act. The National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC) sent a RP Notification letter to the RP on April 11, 2013.

**Description of Removal Activities for this Claimant:** The BPD requested that the Van Buren Fire Department (VBFD) respond to the scene. After the VBFD arrived on scene and determined that their capabilities to mitigate the discharge would not be adequate a mutual aid request was placed to the Western Wayne County HAZMAT Response Team (WW-HMRT).

After the arrival of the WW-HMRT, the discharge was reported to the National Response Center (#960873) and the U.S. EPA. The spill was estimated at approximately 20 gallons and sheening had extended to an area of about 300 feet by 30 feet. The sheen was contained by first responders with boom and the product was collected utilizing absorbent pads.

VBFD hired a contractor to remove and decontaminate containment boom and dispose of all absorbent material.

**The Claim:** On April 10, 2013, Charter Township of Van Buren, thru the Law Office of Gasiorek, Morgan, Greco & McCauley, PC, presented a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NDFC) for reimbursement of their alleged uncompensated removal costs in the amount of \$19,277.69<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NPFC Standard Claim Form dated April 5, 2013.

APPLICABLE LAW:

Under OPA 90, at 33 USC § 2702(a), responsible parties are liable for removal costs and damages resulting from the discharge of oil into navigable waters and adjoining shorelines, as described in Section 2702(b) of OPA 90. A responsible party's liability will include "removal costs incurred by any person for acts taken by the person which are consistent with the National Contingency Plan". 33 USC § 2702(b)(1)(B).

"Oil" is defined in relevant part, at 33 USC § 2701(23), to mean "oil of any kind or in any form, including petroleum, fuel oil, sludge, oil refuse, and oil mixed with wastes other than dredged spoil".

The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF), which is administered by the NPFC, is available, pursuant to 33 USC §§ 2712(a)(4) and 2713 and the OSLTF claims adjudication regulations at 33 CFR Part 136, to pay claims for uncompensated removal costs that are determined to be consistent with the National Contingency Plan and uncompensated damages. Removal costs are defined as "the costs of removal that are incurred after a discharge of oil has occurred or, in any case in which there is a substantial threat of a discharge of oil, the costs to prevent, minimize, or mitigate oil pollution from an incident".

Under 33 USC §2713(b)(2) and 33 CFR 136.103(d) no claim against the OSLTF may be approved or certified for payment during the pendency of an action by the claimant in court to recover the same costs that are the subject of the claim. See also, 33 USC §2713(c) and 33 CFR 136.103(c)(2) [claimant election].

33 U.S.C. §2713(d) provides that "If a claim is presented in accordance with this section, including a claim for interim, short-term damages representing less than the full amount of damages to which the claimant ultimately may be entitled, and full and adequate compensation is unavailable, a claim for the uncompensated damages and removal costs may be presented to the Fund."

Under 33 CFR 136.105(a) and 136.105(e)(6), the claimant bears the burden of providing to the NPFC, all evidence, information, and documentation deemed necessary by the Director, NPFC, to support the claim.

Under 33 CFR 136.105(b) each claim must be in writing, for a sum certain for each category of uncompensated damages or removal costs resulting from an incident. In addition, under 33 CFR 136, the claimant bears the burden to prove the removal actions were reasonable in response to the scope of the oil spill incident, and the NPFC has the authority and responsibility to perform a reasonableness determination. Specifically, under 33 CFR 136.203, "a claimant must establish -

- (a) That the actions taken were necessary to prevent, minimize, or mitigate the effects of the incident;
- (b) That the removal costs were incurred as a result of these actions;
- (c) That the actions taken were determined by the FOSC to be consistent with the National Contingency Plan or were directed by the FOSC."

Under 33 CFR 136.205 "the amount of compensation allowable is the total of uncompensated *reasonable* removal costs of actions taken that were determined by the FOSC to be consistent with the National Contingency Plan or were directed by the FOSC. Except in exceptional

circumstances, removal *activities* for which costs are being claimed must have been coordinated with the FOOSC.” [Emphasis added].

**DETERMINATION OF LOSS:**

***A. Overview:***

1. FOOSC coordination was provided by U.S. EPA Region V (Jon Gulch) in accordance with CFR § 136.203.
2. The incident involved the discharge of “oil” as defined in OPA 90, 33 U.S.C. §2701 to “navigable waters.”
3. In accordance with 33 CFR § 136.105(e)(12), the claimant has certified no suit has been filed in court for the claimed costs.
4. In accordance with 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(1), the claim was submitted within the six year statute of limitations for removal costs.
5. The NPFC Claims Manager thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted with the claim and determined which of the costs presented were for actions in accordance with the NCP and that the costs for these actions were reasonable and allowable under OPA and 33 CFR § 136.205.

***B. Analysis:***

NPFC CA reviewed the actual cost invoices and dailies to confirm that the claimant had incurred all costs claimed. The review focused on: (1) whether the actions taken were compensable “removal actions” under OPA and the claims regulations at 33 CFR 136 (e.g., actions to prevent, minimize, mitigate the effects of the incident); (2) whether the costs were incurred as a result of these actions; (3) whether the actions taken were determined by the FOOSC, to be consistent with the NCP or directed by the FOOSC, and (4) whether the costs were adequately documented and reasonable.

The Claimant is requesting \$175.00 for 3.5 hours of usage for the VBFD dive trailer and boat. This apparatus does not appear on the VBFD Incident Report dated November 28, 2010. The Claimant has failed to provide adequate documentation that shows the apparatus actually responded to the scene or how it was utilized in the emergency response activities. Therefore the NPFC denies the cost of \$175.00 for the dive trailer and boat.

The Claimant is requesting labor cost of \$46.40 for Officer Moening and \$42.98 for Officer Miller (1 hour wage each). The Claimant has not provided adequate documentation that shows how these officers were utilized in the emergency response activities. Furthermore the VBFD Incident Report states that these officers “were on scene in the parking lot.” This description does not show that the officers supported the incident. Therefore the NPFC denies the costs of \$89.38 for these officers.

The Claimant is requesting labor costs of \$204.16 (\$37.12 for 5.5 hours) for Officer Stanton. The VBPD Call For Service Log states that the officer was dispatched at 9:52:24am and cleared the incident at 2:14:46pm. This is a total time accumulation of 4 hours and 23 minutes. The NPFC has determined that the officer total time dedicated to the emergency response is 4.5 hours. Therefore the NPFC approves labor costs of \$167.04 and denies the remaining \$37.12.

The Claimant is requesting equipment costs of \$375.00 (\$75.00 for 5 hours) for the usage of the VBPD Marine One. The vessel was operated by Officer Stanton of VBPD to assist in setting containment boom. Since the NPFC has determined that the officer was utilized for only 4.5 hours the vessel usage time is also determined to be 4.5 hours. The Claimant has also failed to provide a rate schedule to support the hourly rate invoiced for the VBPD Marine One. The NPFC has determined that \$40.00 per hour is a reasonable rate based on the comparable costs for similar equipment by other Oil Spill Response Organizations (OSRO). Therefore the NPFC approves the equipment costs of \$180.00 and denies the remaining \$195.00.

All other costs were validated and the NPFC has determined the costs were reasonable, necessary and performed in accordance with the National Contingency Plan (NCP).

On that basis, the Claims Manager hereby determines that the Claimant did in fact incur \$18,781.19 of uncompensated removal costs and that amount is payable by the OSLTF as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim #E11503-0001. The Claimant states that all costs claimed are for uncompensated removal costs incurred by the Claimant for this incident on November 28, 2010. The Claimant represents that all costs paid by the Claimant are compensable removal costs, payable by the OSLTF as presented by the Claimant.

**C. Determined Amount:**

The NPFC hereby determines that the OSLTF will pay \$18,781.19 as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim #E11503-0001. All costs claimed are for charges paid for by the Claimant for removal actions as that term is defined in OPA and, are compensable removal costs, payable by the OSLTF as presented by the Claimants.

**AMOUNT: \$18,781.19**

Claim Supervisor:  

Date of Supervisor's review: 7/1/13

Supervisor Action: *Approved*

Supervisor's Comments:

ACCEPTANCE / RELEASE AGREEMENT

Claim Number: E11503-0001	Claimant Name: Charter Township of Van Buren
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I, the undersigned, ACCEPT this settlement offer of \$18,781.19 as full and final compensation for removal costs arising from the specific claim number identified above. With my signature, I also acknowledge that I accept as final agency action all costs submitted with subject claim that were denied in the determination and for which I received no compensation.

This settlement represents full and final release and satisfaction of the amounts paid from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 for this claim. I hereby assign, transfer, and subrogate to the United States all rights, claims, interest and rights of action, that I may have against any party, person, firm or corporation that may be liable for the amounts paid for which I have been compensated under this claim. I authorize the United States to sue, compromise or settle in my name and the United States fully substituted for me and subrogated to all of my rights arising from and associated with those amounts paid for which I am compensated for with this settlement offer. I warrant that no legal action has been brought regarding this matter and no settlement has been or will be made by me or any person on my behalf with any other party for amounts paid which is the subject of this claim against the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (Fund).

This settlement is not an admission of liability by any party.

With my signature, I acknowledge that I accept as final agency action all amounts paid for this claim and amounts denied in the determination for which I received no compensation.

I, the undersigned, agree that, upon acceptance of any compensation from the Fund, I will cooperate fully with the United States in any claim and/or action by the United States against any person or party to recover the compensation. The cooperation shall include, but is not limited to, immediately reimbursing the Fund for any compensation received from any other source for those amounts paid for which the Fund has provided compensation, by providing any documentation, evidence, testimony, and other support, as may be necessary for the United States to recover from any other person or party.

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the information contained in this claim represents all material facts and is true. I understand that misrepresentation of facts is subject to prosecution under federal law (including, but not limited to 18 U.S.C. §§ 287 and 1001).

_____	_____
Title of Person Signing	Date of Signature
_____	_____
Printed Name of Claimant or Authorized Representative	Signature

_____	_____
Title of Witness	Date of Signature
_____	_____
Printed Name of Witness	Signature

_____	_____	_____
*DUNS/EIN/SSN *Required for Payment	Bank Routing Number	Bank Account Number