

U.S. Department  
of Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Director  
United States Coast Guard  
National Pollution Funds Center  
Natural Resource Damage (NRD)  
Claims Division

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16480

4 October 2011

*CERTIFIED MAIL Number: 7011 1150 0000 4636 2809*

Ms. Gloria P. Casher  
[REDACTED]

RE: Claim Number: N10036- 1333

Dear Ms. Casher:

The National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC) reviewed your claim for loss of use of natural resources resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. We have determined that you have not met your burden of proving a loss as defined by the Oil Pollution Act (OPA, 33 U.S.C. § 2701 *et seq.*) and OPA claims regulations (33 C.F.R. Part 136). Accordingly, the NPFC denies payment of your claim. The basis of this determination follows.

### ***Background***

On or about 20 April 2010, the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit Deepwater Horizon exploded and sank in the Gulf of Mexico. As a result, oil was discharged and the federal government and Gulf Coast states closed certain waters to commercial and recreational fishing. The Coast Guard designated the source of the discharge and identified BP as a responsible party (RP). BP accepted the designation and advertised its OPA claims process. On 23 August 2010, the Gulf Coast Claims Facility (GCCF) began accepting and adjudicating individual and business claims on behalf of BP.

### ***Facts***

On 25 August 2011, the NPFC received your claim for \$3,000 in damages for loss of use of natural resources allegedly resulting from the Deepwater Horizon spill. You assert that you and your family would have bought and eaten seafood if not for the spill. Your claim submitted to the GCCF on 22 January 2011, was denied.

## ***Applicable Law***

OPA provides that the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund is available to pay claims for uncompensated damages resulting from oil pollution incidents (33 U.S.C. §2712(a)(4)). Damages include loss of subsistence use of natural resources (33 U.S.C. §2702(b)(2)(C)) (i.e., resources relied upon for food). The regulations at 33 C.F.R. Part 136 include general claim requirements and requirements specific to lost subsistence use claims.

### **General Claim Requirements**

Claims, including those for lost subsistence use of natural resources, must be: (a) in writing for a sum certain (33 C.F.R. §136.105(b)), (b) submitted to the NPFC within three years after the date on which the injury and its connection with the incident were reasonably discoverable (33 C.F.R. §136.101(a)), and (c) presented first to the RP or guarantor and that claim is denied or not settled by payment by any person within 90 days after the date the claim was presented before presentation to the Fund. 33 U.S.C. § 2713(c)(2) (except as noted in 33 C.F.R. §136.103(a)).

### **Subsistence Use Loss Claim Requirements**

The claims regulations (33 C.F.R. §§136.219-223) provide additional requirements for lost subsistence use claims. Specifically, each claim for loss of subsistence use of natural resources must:

- 1) be for lost subsistence use and submitted by an eligible claimant;
- 2) identify and describe the actual subsistence use of each specific natural resource for which compensation is being claimed;
- 3) describe how and to what extent the claimant's subsistence use was affected by injury to or loss of each specific natural resource;
- 4) describe efforts to mitigate the subsistence use loss;
- 5) be based on the reasonable cost to replace the lost subsistence use of natural resources; and
- 6) be reduced by the amount of all compensation made available to the claimant to compensate for the loss, all income which was derived by utilizing the time which otherwise would have been used to obtain the subsistence resources, and any avoided costs associated with the subsistence activity, such as gas for vehicles or boats, bait, and other overhead costs not incurred due to the spill.

NPFC has provided more detail about these claim requirements at:  
[http://www.uscg.mil/npfc/Claims/DWH\\_faqs.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/npfc/Claims/DWH_faqs.asp).

### ***Claim Submission and Documentation***

Your claim, received by the NPFC on 25 August 2011, included the Optional OSLTF Claim Form. On your claim form, you note that you suffered a loss because you did not buy seafood as you usually do for your family reunions. Fish and shellfish were

available, but you were afraid to eat it. You provided no other supporting documentation for your claim.

### ***NPFC Determination***

The NPFC finds that you have not met your burden of proving a subsistence use loss as defined by OPA (33 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) and OPA claims regulations (33 C.F.R. Part 136). Your claim is denied because:

- 1) You have not demonstrated a loss of subsistence use of natural resources as a result of the spill. Your past use was based on purchase of seafood and your claimed loss is based on your decision not to purchase seafood because you considered it to be contaminated with oil. Yet, seafood determined to be safe for consumption by state and federal health officials, including seafood from outside the spill area, was available for purchase.
- 2) You have not explained how you determined your claimed loss of \$3,000 (i.e., the period of claimed loss and the actual costs incurred to replace your claimed loss or documentation to establish reasonable estimates of replacement costs based on your pattern of subsistence use).

### ***Request for Reconsideration***

Under OPA, you may ask the NPFC to reconsider this determination. Reconsideration requests must be received by the NPFC in writing within 60 days of the date of this letter, and will be based upon the additional factual or legal information that you provide with your request. A claim may be reconsidered only once, and written disposition of a reconsideration request constitutes final agency action. If the NPFC fails to issue a written decision within 90 days after receipt of a request for reconsideration, this determination, at the option of the claimant, shall be deemed final agency action.

Should you choose to request NPFC reconsideration of this determination, please mail the request and additional claim information with the appropriate claim number (N10036-1333) to:

Chief (Cn)  
National Pollution Funds Center  
U.S. Coast Guard, Stop 7100  
4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1000  
Arlington, VA 20598-7100

If you have any questions about reconsideration, please feel free to contact the NPFC at the above address or by phone at 800-280-7118.

Sincerely,



Natural Resource Damage Claims Division  
National Pollution Funds Center  
U.S. Coast Guard