

CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION FORM

Claim Number	: 915067-0001
Claimant	: BP Exploration & Production, Inc.
Type of Claimant	: Corporate
Type of Claim	: Removal Costs
Claim Manager	: [REDACTED]
Amount Requested	: \$13,603.50

**FACTS:**

***A. Oil Spill Incident:***

On July 8, 2014, the CG National Response Center (NRC) received notification that tar balls were discovered washing up along Drum Bay, located in the Gulf of Mexico, a navigable waterway in St. Bernard Parish, LA.<sup>1</sup> The Coast Guard Gulf Coast Incident Management Team (CG GCIMT) was notified and responded to the incident.

BP Exploration & Production, Inc. (BP) was initially designated as the Responsible Party (RP) because of the location of the incident and the tar balls appeared to be visibly consistent with MC-252 oil as determined by the Federal On-scene Coordinator (FOSC). Because of both the rising tide and the time of day, the CG GCIMT directed the response and removal activities for this incident, using BP-contracted resources.

***B. Description of removal actions performed:***

On July 8, 2014, Danos & Curole Marine Contractors (BP's Oil Spill Response Organization (OSRO)) and USCG personnel arrived on-scene, where it was determined that, until further analysis is performed, BP was responsible for cleanup and removal activities. On July 10, 2014, Danos & Curole Marine Contractors (Danos) removed the tar balls from the beach. Danos personnel (one foreman, three technicians) provided transport, cleaned the affected area and sent the non-hazardous waste for disposal in accordance with both the NCP and the USCG FOSC Recovered Waste Management Plan.

***Sample Analysis:*** The United States Coast Guard (USCG) sampled the tarballs and forwarded the samples to the Coast Guard Marine Safety Laboratory (MSL) on November 19, 2014 (MSL Case Number 15-029). In an Oil Sample Analysis Report dated December 1, 2014, the MSL determined that sample 15-029-1 contained heavy petroleum oil with characteristics somewhat similar to those of samples 10-095-QC and 10-220-2 (MC252). However, the analysis noted that there were differences present between the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that were not attributable to known-weathering or non-petroleum contamination. As such, the conclusion was a non-match. While the biomarker profiles very strongly suggested a relationship between sample 15-029-1 and samples 10-095-QC and 10-220-2, it was not possible (based exclusively on MSL analysis) to determine if the differences noted between the PAHs were the result of petroleum oil mixing in the environment or if they were "real" differences indicating the samples were unrelated.

<sup>1</sup> See NRC Report # 1088356, opened on 7/08/2014.

Therefore, the MSL concluded that comparison of sample 15-029-1 to samples 10-095-QC and 10-220-2 results in a non-match.<sup>2</sup>

**C. The Claim:** On March 18, 2014, BP submitted a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC), asserting that the oil was not Deepwater Horizon oil and sought reimbursement of its uncompensated removal costs in the amount of \$13,603.50 for services provided on July 10, 2014, which included personnel, vessels and equipment. The claimed removal costs are based on the rate schedule in place at the time services were provided. A copy of the vendor rate schedule is provided in the claim file.

**APPLICABLE LAW:**

"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".

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". 33 USC § 2701(31).

Removal costs include any 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).

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.

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

<sup>2</sup> See MSL Case # 15-029, determined 12/01/2014.

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 FOSC.” [Emphasis added].

**DETERMINATION OF LOSS:**

**A. Findings of Fact:**

1. CG GCIMT as the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for this incident, oversaw the removal actions and determined that the actions undertaken by BP’s contracted OSRO were consistent with the NCP as reported in NRC Report # 1088356; 33 U.S.C. §§ 2702(b)(1)(B) and 2712(a)(4);<sup>3</sup>
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. The claim was submitted within the six year period of limitations for claims, 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(1);
5. The NPFC Claims Manager thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted with the claim and determined 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:**

As a result of the MSL analysis that it could not conclude whether or not the tar balls were derived from MC 252 oil, this is a mystery spill for which BP seeks reimbursement of its removal costs. The Claimant states that all costs claimed are for uncompensated removal costs incurred for this incident on July 10, 2014. BP represents that all costs paid by it are compensable removal costs, payable by the OSLTF as presented by the Claimant.

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 FOSC, to be consistent with the NCP or directed by the FOSC, and (4) whether the costs were adequately documented and reasonable.

Upon review of the claim submission, the NPFC has determined that the documentation presented to support the actions is reasonable, necessary and in accordance with the response objectives as determined by the CG GCIMT and that the actions were also monitored by CG personnel.

**C. Determined Amount: \$13,603.50**

The NPFC hereby determines that the OSLTF will offer to pay \$13,603.50 as full compensation for the claimed removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the

---

<sup>3</sup> See NRC Tracker Spreadsheet for NRC Report # 1088356.

NPFC under claim 915067-0001. 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 Claimant.

Claim Supervisor: 

Date of Supervisor's review: *3/30/15*

Supervisor Action: *Approved*

Supervisor's Comments: