

## CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Claim Number:</b>     | N13033-0001               |
| <b>Claimant:</b>         | Texas General Land Office |
| <b>Type of Claimant:</b> | State                     |
| <b>Type of Claim:</b>    | Removal Costs             |
| <b>Claim Manager:</b>    | [REDACTED]                |
| <b>Amount Requested:</b> | \$1,392.43                |

### **FACTS:**

**Oil Spill Incident:** On June 28, 2013, the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) was notified of an oil spill from the F/V VAN MINH into the Tres Palacios Bay, Matagorda County, TX, a navigable waterway of the United States.

**Description of Removal Activities for this Claimant:** TGLO personnel responded with CG personnel from MSU Galveston in an effort to oversee the cleanup of the oil spill. The spill was federalized by CG personnel under Federal Project Number N13033 as the owner of the vessel was unable to conduct a proper cleanup.<sup>1</sup>

**The Claim:** On April 22, 2014, TGLO submitted a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC) for reimbursement of their uncompensated removal costs of State personnel and equipment in the amount of \$1,392.43.<sup>2</sup> The NPFC issued an RP Notification to the Responsible Party (RP) on April 23, 2014.<sup>3</sup>

### **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

<sup>1</sup> See TGLO Expedited Small Claim Package dated April 17, 2014

<sup>2</sup> See TGLO Expedited Small Claim Package dated April 17, 2014

<sup>3</sup> See RP Notification Letter dated April 23, 2014.

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 FOSC.” [Emphasis added].

## **DETERMINATION OF LOSS**

### ***A. Overview:***

1. PO [REDACTED] of Coast Guard MSU Galveston signed a TGLO and USCG Agreement attesting to the fact that the TGLO response and removal actions were in accordance the National Contingency Plan.<sup>4</sup>
2. The incident involved the discharge of “oil” as defined in OPA 90, 33 U.S.C. § 2701(23), to navigable waters.

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<sup>4</sup> See TGLO and USCG Agreement dated June 28, 2013

3. In accordance with 33 CFR § 136.105(e)(12), the claimant has certified no suit has been filed in court for the claimed uncompensated removal 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 has thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted with the claim and determined that the removal costs presented were for actions in accordance with the NCP and that the costs for these actions were indeed 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 FOSC, to be consistent with the NCP or directed by the FOSC, and (4) whether the costs were adequately documented and reasonable.

The NPFC has confirmed the actions undertaken as the State On Scene Coordinator (SOSC) and the NPFC has verified the rates charged are in accordance with the State's published rates. On that basis, the Claims Manager hereby determines that the Claimant did in fact incur \$1,392.43 of uncompensated removal costs and that 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 #N13033-0001.

The NPFC hereby determines that the OSLTF will pay \$1,392.43 as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim # N13033-0001. 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.

**Amount: \$1,392.43**

Claim Supervisor 

Date of Supervisor's review: *April 28, 2014*

Supervisor Action: *Approved*