

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**



Director
National Pollution Funds Center
United States Coast Guard

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US COAST GUARD
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Arlington, VA 20598-7100
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CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED
Number: 7011 1150 0000 4636 4001

5890/DWHZ
26 July 2012

Louis Ashley Boudreaux


Re: Claim Number: N10036-1822

Dear Mr. Boudreaux:

The National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC), in accordance with the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, 33 U.S.C. § 2701 et seq. (OPA) and the associated regulations at 33 C.F.R. Part 136, denies payment on the claim number N10036-1822 involving the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Please see the attached Claim Summary/Determination Form for further explanation.

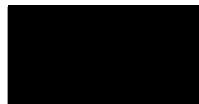
You may make a written request for reconsideration of this claim. The reconsideration must be received by the NPFC within 60 days of the date of this letter and must include the factual or legal basis of the request for reconsideration, providing any additional support for the claim. However, if you find that you will be unable to gather particular information within the time period, you may include a request for an extension of time for a specified duration with your reconsideration request.

Reconsideration of the denial will be based upon the information provided. A claim may be reconsidered only once. Disposition of that reconsideration in writing 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 claim number N10036-1822.

Mail reconsideration requests to:

Director (ca)
NPFC CA MS 7100
US COAST GUARD
4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 1000
Arlington, VA 20598-7100

Sincerely,



Claims Adjudication Division
National Pollution Funds Center
U.S. Coast Guard

Enclosure: Claim Summary/Determination Form

CLAIM SUMMARY/DETERMINATION FORM

Claim Number	N10036-1822
Claimant	Louis Ashley Boudreaux
Type of Claimant	Private (US)
Type of Claim	Loss of Profits and Impairment of Earning Capacity
Amount Requested	\$10,530.00

FACTS

On or about 20 April 2010, the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit Deepwater Horizon (Deepwater Horizon) exploded and sank in the Gulf of Mexico. As a result of the explosion and sinking, oil was discharged. 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 certain individual and business claims on behalf of BP.

On 08 March 2012, the United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana issued a "Transition Order" (TO) limiting the GCCF's ability to accept, process, or pay claims except as provided in that order. The TO created a Transition Process (TP) to facilitate the transition of the claims process from the GCCF to a proposed Court Supervised Settlement Program (CSSP). The Court granted Preliminary Approval of the proposed settlement agreement on 2 May 2012, and the CSSP began processing claims on 4 June, 2012.

CLAIM AND CLAIMANT

On 23 May 2012, Louis Ashley Boudreaux (the Claimant) presented a claim to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) seeking \$10,530.00 in loss of profits damages resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.¹

At the time of the oil spill, the Claimant was operating a rental company that specialized in oilfield related items.² The Claimant alleged that his business slowed as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and he personally lost income when the company was unable to pay his salary.³

In order to calculate his losses, the Claimant subtracted 2010 earnings from previous years to reach a requested sum certain of \$10,530.00.

APPLICABLE LAW

Under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), at 33 U.S.C. § 2702(a), responsible parties are liable for removal costs and damages resulting from the discharge of oil into or upon the navigable waters or adjoining shorelines or the exclusive economic zone, as described in § 2702(b) of OPA.

The OSLTF which is administered by the NPFC, is available, pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 2712(a)(4) and § 2713 and the OSLTF claims adjudication regulations at 33 C.F.R. Part 136, to pay claims for uncompensated damages. One type of damages available pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 136.231 is

¹ Optional OSLTF Claim Form, signed 14 May 2012.

² Additional Information Cover Letter, dated 6 June 2012.

³ Additional Information Cover Letter, dated 6 June 2012.

a claim for loss of profits or impairment of earning capacity due to injury to or destruction of natural resources.

Under 33 C.F.R. § 136.233 a claimant must establish the following:

- (a) That real or personal property or natural resources have been injured, destroyed, or lost.
- (b) That the claimant's income was reduced as a consequence of injury to, destruction of, or loss of property or natural resources, and the amount of that reduction.
- (c) The amount of the claimant's profits or earnings in comparable periods and during the period when the claimed loss or impairment was suffered, as established by income tax returns, financial statements, and similar documents. In addition, comparative figures for profits or earnings for the same or similar activities outside of the area affected by the incident also must be established.
- (d) Whether alternative employment or business was available and undertaken and, if so, the amount of income received. All income that a claimant received as a result of the incident must be clearly indicated and any saved overhead and other normal expenses not incurred as a result of the incident must be established.

Under 33 C.F.R. § 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 C.F.R. § 136.235, the amount of compensation allowable for a claim involving loss of profits or impairment of earning capacity is limited to the actual net reduction or loss of earnings or profits suffered. Calculations for net reductions or losses must clearly reflect adjustments for—

- (a) All income resulting from the incident;
- (b) All income from alternative employment or business undertaken;
- (c) Potential income from alternative employment or business not undertake, but reasonably available;
- (d) Any saved overhead or normal expenses not incurred as a result of the incident; and
- (e) State, local, and Federal taxes.

Under 33 U.S.C. § 2712(f), payment of any claim or obligation by the Fund under OPA shall be subject to the United States Government acquiring by subrogation all rights of the claimant or State to recover from the responsible party.

DETERMINATION OF LOSS

Claimant's Submission to the OSLTF

To support this claim, the Claimant submitted the following documentation:

- Optional OSLTF Claim Form, signed 14 May 2012;
- Letter from Claimant to NPFC, dated 1 May 2012;
- Partial Copy of GCCF Claim Form, undated;
- 2008 Individual Income Tax Return;
- 2009 Individual Income Tax Return;
- 2010 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement;
- 2009 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement;
- 2008 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement;

- Additional Information Cover Letter, dated 6 June 2012;
- 2010 Individual Income Tax Return;
- GCCF Denial Letter on interim Payment/Final Payment Claim, dated 15 April 2011;
- Copy of GCCF Interim Payment Claim Form, dated 21 February 2011;
- Profit and Loss Statements for January 2009 through October 2010.

On 21 February 2011, the Claimant presented an Interim Payment (IP) claim to the RP/GCCF, seeking loss of profits and impairment of earning capacity damages in the amount of \$10,530.00.⁴ The Claimant was assigned Claimant ID # 3501271.⁵ The RP/GCCF denied payment on this claim.

On 23 May 2012, the Claimant submitted this claim to the NPFC, seeking \$10,530.00 in loss of profits and impairment of earning capacity damages.⁶ The NPFC may adjudicate this claim to the extent that these damages have first been presented to the RP/GCCF.⁷ Because the Claimant has presented these damages first to the RP/GCCF in an amount equal to the amount now presented to the NPFC, this determination may properly address the entirety of the claim now before the NPFC, in the amount of \$10,530.00.

NPFC Determination

Under 33 U.S.C. § 2702(b)(2)(E) and 33 C.F.R. Part 136, a claimant must prove that any loss of income was due to injury, destruction or loss of real or personal property or of a natural resource as a result of a discharge or substantial threat of a discharge of oil. Under 33 C.F.R. § 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 this claim.

As an initial matter, it appears that the Claimant is a member of the economic damages class of the BP settlement. This claim is therefore considered to have been settled, and the Claimant is ineligible to recover funds from the OSLTF. According to OPA, the payment of any claim by the NPFC is subject to the NPFC's ability to obtain, by subrogation, the rights to recover all costs and damages from the responsible party. If a claim has been settled, the Claimant no longer has rights to the claim and therefore cannot subrogate rights to the NPFC.

While this claim may not have been quantified or paid, it is considered to have been settled by virtue of the Court's preliminary approval of the settlement agreement. If the Claimant disagrees that he is a member of the economic damages class of the BP Settlement, he should then submit evidence to indicate that he has either opted out or is excluded from the BP Settlement in his request for reconsideration of this claim.

Furthermore, this claim is denied under OPA's loss of profits damage category, as the Claimant has failed to prove that he has sustained a financial loss as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In order to prove a claim for loss of profits damages, a claimant must provide documentation sufficient to prove (1) that the claimant sustained an actual financial loss, and (2) that the loss was caused by the discharge of oil resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The financial documentation provided by the Claimant fails to support the assertion that any loss of income in 2010 was directly attributable to the oil spill. A look at the Claimant's provided W-

⁴ Copy of GCCF Interim Payment Claim Form, dated 21 February 2011.

⁵ GCCF Denial Letter on Interim Payment/Final Payment Claim, dated 15 April 2011.

⁶ Optional OSLTF Claim Form, signed 14 May 2012.

⁷ 33 C.F.R. § 136.103(a).

2s show a drop in income between 2008 and 2009 that continued into 2010, albeit at an accelerated rate.⁸ Furthermore, the stated salaries on those W-2s do not match the stated income shown on the Claimant's individual tax returns, and, as a result, the NPFC cannot ascertain the source of the Claimant's additional income or how it may have impacted his earnings in 2010.

In a letter dated 20 May 2012, the NPFC requested additional information, which included documents substantiating contracts or clients lost as a result of the oil spill as well as contact information for those clients.⁹ The Claimant was unable to provide this information, and the existing documentation in the claim is insufficient to create a causal link between the oil spill and the Claimant's alleged losses. For example, the NPFC would require proof that clients and contracts were lost as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill specifically, and not the numerous other factors impacting businesses in the Gulf region, such as the drilling moratorium or a myriad of other economic factors. Based on the foregoing, the Claimant has failed to demonstrate that the Deepwater Horizon oil spill resulted in a loss of income to his business which led to the inability of his business to pay his salary.

Should the Claimant decide to submit a request for reconsideration, he would need to provide specific evidence in the form of contracts or communications demonstrating clients and business lost as a result of the oil spill. Furthermore, the Claimant would need to provide more specific financial information showing precisely what losses were suffered.

This claim is denied because the Claimant failed to meet his burden to demonstrate (1) that he sustained a loss in the amount of \$10,530.00, (2) that the alleged loss is due to the injury, destruction or loss of property or natural resources as a result of a discharge or substantial threat of a discharge of oil, and (3) because the Claimant has been settled by virtue of belonging to the economic damages class associated with the CSSP.

Claim Supervisor: *NPFC Claims Adjudication Division*

Date of Supervisor's Review: *7/26/12*

Supervisor's Action: *Denial approved*

Supervisor's Comments:

⁸ 2008 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement; 2009 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement; 2010 W-2 Wage and Tax Statement.

⁹ NPFC Request for Additional Information, dated 20 May 2012.