

CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION FORM

Date	: 12/30/2009
Claim Number	: 910039-001
Claimant	: United States Environmental Services, L.L.C.
Type of Claimant	: Corporate
Type of Claim	: Removal Costs
Claim Manager	: ██████████
Amount Requested	: \$21,886.34

FACTS:

- Oil Spill Incident:*** The United States Coast Guard Sector Houston Case # 385445,¹ reports that on November 16, 2007, the Tekoil and Gas Gulf Coast F-1 Platform discharged approximately one gallon of crude oil into Trinity Bay, a navigable waterway of the US. Additionally, upon investigation, a leak was discovered at this platform, posing a substantial threat to this same waterway.

The incident was reported to the National Response Center (NRC) on November 16, 2007 at approximately 4:28 PM CST via report # 854784 by Mr. ██████████, of O'Brien's Oil Pollution Services (O'Brien's).² The discharge originated from a flow line that was being pressurized for repairs. When the leak was found, the line was shut off and repairs were made.³ O'Brien's was the spill management firm hired by the Responsible Party (RP), Tekoil and Gas Gulf Coast (Tekoil), to facilitate cleanup and necessary repairs. O'Brien's, in turn, hired out United States Environmental Services, L.L.C. (USES) to provide emergency environmental cleanup for this incident.⁴

Description of removal actions performed: On November 16, 2007, USES was contacted by O'Brien's regarding the spill/leak into Trinity Bay. USES was requested to provide emergency cleanup and they were mobilized to the spill site at approximately 4:30 PM. When USES personnel arrived, there was no oil found in the area; however, USES personnel did work to retrieve the absorbent boom that had been placed in the spill area.⁵

On November 17, 2009, USES personnel deployed absorbent boom in preparation to repair the leaking pipes. After standing by for the repairs, the boom was gathered and disposed of in plastic bags. Two days later, on November 19, 2007, USES returned to the spill site and re-deployed absorbent boom on the water. Four leaks were repaired and no oil was spilled in the process. By November 20, 2007, all vessels were cleaned and returned to service by USES. One roll-of box of waste was accumulated and sent for disposal.⁶

¹ See, Sector Houston's Coast Guard Case # 385445 opened 12/10/2007

² See, NRC report # 854784, dated 11/16/2007

³ See, USCG Sector Houston Investigator Statement, written by MST2 ██████████, USCG Sector Houston/Galveston Enforcement Summary # 3117603 and Sector Houston's Coast Guard Case # 385445, opened 12/10/2007

⁴ See, USES Emergency Response Report, prepared for the O'Brien's Group on 11/19/2007

⁵ See, USES Emergency Response Report, prepared for the O'Brien's Group on 11/19/2007

⁶ See, USES Emergency Response Report, prepared for the O'Brien's Group on 11/19/2007

3. **The Claim:** On December 7, 2009, USES submitted a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC), for reimbursement of removal costs in the amount of \$21,886.34 for the services provided November 16 through November 20, 2007. This claim is for removal costs 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 submission.

This claim consists of copies of the invoicing and associated dailies, a copy of MISLE Case # 385445, a copy of NRC Report # 854784, a copy of the USCG Sector Houston Investigator Statement filled out by PO [REDACTED], a copy of the USCG Witness Statement filled out by Ms. [REDACTED], a copy of the Enforcement Summary for Enforcement Activity # 3117603, a copy of the Notice of Federal Interest issued by PO [REDACTED], a copy of USES Project # 093-07-0236 Emergency Response Report, a copy of the Disposal of Non-Hazardous Waste Manifests and photographs and internal email correspondence.

The review of the actual cost invoicing and dailies 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 consistent with the NCP or directed by the FOOSC, and (4) whether the costs were adequately documented.

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 FOSC.” [Emphasis added].

DETERMINATION OF LOSS:

A. Overview:

1. The FOSC coordination has been established via Sector Houston’s Case Report # 385445.⁷
2. The incident involved the report of a discharge of “oil” as defined in OPA 90, 33 U.S.C. § 2701(23), 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 uncompensated removal costs.
4. The claim was submitted on time.
5. Presentment of costs to the RP was made by the claimant, prior to the submission of the claim. The NPFC also made presentment of costs to the RP and to date the NPFC has received no response.
6. The NPFC Claims Manager has thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted with the claim and determined that all 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:

⁷ See, Sector Houston’s Coast Guard Case # 385445 opened 12/10/2007

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 Claims Manager confirmed that the USCG Sector Houston did in fact perform a site assessment on November 16, 2007. The Claims Manager validated the costs incurred and determined they were reasonable and 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 \$21,886.34 of uncompensated removal costs and that that amount is properly payable by the OSLTF as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim #910039-001. The claimant states that all costs claimed are for uncompensated removal costs incurred by the claimant for this incident from November 16 through November 20, 2007. 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 \$21,886.34 as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim 910039-001. 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: \$21,886.34

Claim Supervisor: [REDACTED]

Date of Supervisor’s review:

Supervisor Action:

Supervisor’s Comments: