

CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION

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| Claim Number: | A10018-0001 |
| Claimant: | State of California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, OSPR |
| Type of Claimant: | State |
| Type of Claim: | Removal Costs |
| Claim Manager: | [REDACTED] |
| Amount Requested: | \$4,177.26 |

FACTS:

Oil Spill Incident: The United States Coast Guard Sector San Francisco reports¹ that on July 14, 2010, it received notification of a vessel (the P/C Seeker) in Freeport Marina located in Sacramento, CA. Freeport Marina is located along the Sacramento River, a navigable waterway of the US. Both the USCG and the State of California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) responded and estimated the vessel had up to 300 gallons of diesel fuel onboard and was a substantial threat to the environment. The vessel was discharging a small amount of fuel, causing a sheen.

Description of Removal Activities: Global Diving and Salvage was hired by the Coast Guard for cleanup and removal efforts. All OSPR claimed costs are for state oversight of the sunken vessel before the Federal Project was opened.

A Responsible Party has been identified as Mr. [REDACTED]. As a result of personal and financial hardships, he was unable to hire a contractor and thus the Coast Guard opened under Federal Project A10018. Global Diving and Salvage was then contracted to cleanup and remove the oil.

Claim: On March 4, 2015, OSPR submitted a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC) for reimbursement of their uncompensated removal costs in the amount of \$4,177.26.

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".

¹ See USCG Sector San Francisco POLREPS 1 and 2, opened July 16, 2010.

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. Findings of Facts

1. FOSC Coordination has been established via United States Coast Guard Sector San Francisco.²
2. 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.
3. The claim was submitted within the six year statute of limitations. 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(1).
4. A Responsible Party has been identified. 33 U.S.C. § 2701(32).
5. 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

The NPFC Claims Manager has 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 costs were adequately documented and reasonable.

After a review of the claim documentation, the NPFC has determined that the Claimant was able to demonstrate that they incurred \$4,177.26 in personnel costs. USCG FOSC documentation provides support and corroboration for the Claimant’s response actions in this incident. The NPFC has determined that the costs are reasonable and necessary in order to mitigate the threat to the environment and are payable by the OSLTF. All rates were charged in accordance with the state’s salary and equipment schedule.

C. Determined Amount:

The NPFC determines that the OSLTF will pay \$4,177.26 as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim # A10018-0001. 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 Claimant.

Claim Supervisor: 

Date of Supervisor’s review: 3/12/15

Supervisor Action: *Approved*

² See USCG Sector San Francisco POLREPS 1 & 2, opened 7/16/2010.