

CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION

Claim Number:	916070-0001
Claimant:	Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
Type of Claimant:	State
Type of Claim:	Removal Costs
Claim Manager:	[REDACTED]
Amount Requested:	\$141.42

FACTS:

Oil Spill Incident: On January 14, 2016, the Florida Office of Emergency Response (OER) was notified by St. Petersburg Fire and Rescue of a diesel fuel sheen in Coffeepot Bayou in St. Petersburg, FL. Coffeepot Bayou flows into Tampa Bay, which flows in the Gulf of Mexico, all of which are navigable waterways of the US. The sheen was approximately a quarter mile long, emanating from a storm drain. The total amount of fuel was about ten gallons. Over the next several days, both the OER and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) monitored the site and eventually closed the case on January 20, 2016.

No Responsible Party (RP) could be determined for this incident.

The Claim: On September 22, 2016, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) submitted a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NPFC) for reimbursement of its uncompensated removal costs for State personnel, equipment and administrative costs in the amount of \$141.42.

Florida DEP is claiming \$81.02 in State personnel expenses, \$38.40 in State equipment expenses (vehicle and clothing) and \$22.00 in State administrative documentation/photo fees.

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".

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. FOSC Coordination has been established via USCG Sector St. Petersburg.¹ 33 U.S.C. §§ 2702(b)(1)(B) and 2712(a)(4);
2. The incident involved a discharge of “oil” as defined in OPA 90, 33 U.S.C. § 2701(23), to navigable waters;
3. The claim was submitted to NPFC within the six year statute of limitations. 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(1);
4. A Responsible Party has not been identified. 33 U.S.C. § 2701(32);
5. In accordance with 33 CFR § 136.105(e)(12), the Claimant has certified that no suit has been filed by or on behalf of the Claimant in court for the claimed uncompensated removal costs.

¹ See, OER Response Report, signed by the USCG FOSC and dated 1/29/2016.

B. NPFC 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 confirmed that the actions undertaken by the Claimant were reasonable and necessary and that the services were billed in accordance with the state’s rates for reimbursement at the time services were provided. On that basis, the Claims Manager hereby determines that the Claimant did in fact incur \$141.42 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 #916070-0001. The Claimant states that all costs claimed are for uncompensated removal costs incurred by the Claimant for this incident from January 14 through January 20, 2016. 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: \$141.42

The NPFC hereby determines that the OSLTF will pay \$141.42 as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim # 916070-0001. 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: [REDACTED]

Date of Supervisor’s review: *9/26/16* [REDACTED]

Supervisor Action: *Approved*

Supervisor’s Comments: