

## CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION

<b>Claim Number:</b>	M15030-0001
<b>Claimant:</b>	Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
<b>Type of Claimant:</b>	State
<b>Type of Claim:</b>	Removal Costs
<b>Claim Manager:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	\$2,889.11

### FACTS:

**Oil Spill Incident:** On September 29, 2015 the Florida Office of Emergency Response (OER) was notified by the City of Jacksonville of a sunken vessel on the south bank of the St. Johns River leaking oil. The St. John's River flows directly into the Atlantic Ocean, both of which are navigable waterways of the US.

Upon arrival, it was discovered that the vessel was identified as the M/V Lady St. Johns, an 87' dinner cruise boat. Red dye diesel was bubbling out the side of the vessel. OER personnel placed initial sorbent boom and pads until contact was made with the owner of the vessel and an OSRO was hired for cleanup.

The owner of the vessel (and Responsible Party (RP)), [REDACTED], initially hired Moran Environmental, but ultimately the incident was federalized (under FPN # M15030) on September 30, 2015 and taken over by USCG Sector Jacksonville. By the end of the day, the main tanks were empty and the hydraulic line had been pumped. All sources of pollution appeared to be secured and fresh boom/padding was placed to catch any oil that remained. A decision was made to monitor the site daily, with the boom/pads to be removed by October 5, 2015. No further actions by OER were taken at this point and its case was considered closed.

**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, materials, equipment and administrative costs in the amount of \$2,889.11.

Florida DEP is claiming \$622.86 in State personnel expenses, \$2,244.25 in State equipment expenses (vehicle, materials and clothing) and \$22.00 in State administrative documentation/photo fees.

### 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. FOSC Coordination has been established via USCG Sector Jacksonville.<sup>1</sup> 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 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.

### **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 \$2,889.11 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 #M15030-0001. The Claimant states that all costs claimed are for uncompensated removal costs incurred by the Claimant for this incident from September 29 through October 1, 2015. 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: \$2,889.11**

The NPFC hereby determines that the OSLTF will pay \$2,889.11 as full compensation for the reimbursable removal costs incurred by the Claimant and submitted to the NPFC under claim # M15030-0001. 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, POLREPS 1 and 2 for this incident, dated 10/01/2015 and 10/16/2015 respectively.

Claim Supervisor:

[REDACTED]

Date of Supervisor's review: *9/27/16*

[REDACTED]

Supervisor Action: *Approved*

Supervisor's Comments: