

CLAIM SUMMARY/DETERMINATION FORM

Claim Number	N10036-2024
Claimant	Stella Haynes
Type of Claimant	Private (US)
Type of Claim	Loss of Profits or Impairment of Earning Capacity
Amount Requested	\$571.66

**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 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 8 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 02 May 2012, and the CSSP began processing claims on 04 June 2012.

**CLAIM AND CLAIMANT**

On 14 April 2014, Ms. Stella Haynes ("the Claimant"), submitted a claim to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF) for \$571.66 in loss of profits or impairment of earning capacity damages allegedly resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the spill, the Claimant states she traveled to Gulf Shores, Alabama in order to celebrate her sister's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with family. As a result of the spill, the Claimant states the beach was closed.

**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 water, adjoining shorelines, or the exclusive economic zone of the United States, as described in § 2702(b) of OPA.

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

<sup>1</sup> Optional OSLTF Claim Form, signed on 1 August 2013.

- 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; and
- (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 undertaken, 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 NPFC**

The Claimant submitted the following documentation in support of this claim:

- Claim Cover Letter, dated 14 April 2014;
- Copy of Claimant's bank account records for claimed costs.

The Claimant states that this claim was first presented to the Responsible Party and that the RP denied payment on this claim.<sup>2</sup> The NPFC will adjudicate the claim to the extent presentment requirements have been satisfied. If any damages subject of this claim were not first presented to and denied by the RP, these damages are denied for improper presentment.

On 24 April 2014, the Claimant presented this claim to the NPFC, seeking \$571.66 in loss of profits or impairment of earning capacity damages resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

#### **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 all evidence, information, and documentation deemed necessary by the Director, NPFC, to support the claim.

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<sup>2</sup> Claim Cover Letter, 14 April 2014.

The alleged loss is due to personal decision made by the Claimant to (1) rent a hotel room and (2) gas for transporting to and from Alabama. Such a loss as the one claimed in this case, is not a damage that may be compensated from the OSLTF.

Under 33 U.S.C. § 2702(b)(1-2), the only types of claims payable under OPA are oil removal and /or damage claims. Furthermore, "Damages" as explained under 33 U.S.C. § 2702(b)(2) are defined as: natural resources; real or personal property; subsistence use; revenues; profits and earning capacity; and public services. Therefore, in accordance with OPA's implementing claims regulations, the NPFC may not make payment on a claim resulting from a personal decision to travel and stay in an area located in the affected geographical region of an on-going response to a spill of national significance. The Claimant has elected to submit her claim to the NPFC as a loss of profits and earning capacity claim, however, the costs claimed here are not covered under "Profits and Earning Capacity" as defined under OPA in 33 U.S.C. § 2702(b)(2)(E):

Damages equal to the loss of profits or impairment of earning capacity due to the *injury, destruction, or loss of real property, personal property, or natural resources*, which shall be recoverable by any claimant.

Therefore, the claim as presented is not compensable under OPA.

Additionally, the Claimant does not provide documentation that the wedding anniversary activities were canceled, that she did not use her hotel room or that costs were incurred (or, conversely, mitigated) as a result of having moved it to a different location.

Based on the foregoing, this claim is denied because (1) the Claimant has failed to demonstrate that her alleged loss is due to injury or destruction or loss of real or personal property or a natural resource as a result of a discharge or a substantial threat of a discharge of oil (i.e., the Deepwater Horizon oil spill) and (2) the alleged loss is not a covered claim type under OPA and therefore ineligible for compensation.

Claim Supervisor:  *NPFC Claims Adjudication Division*

Date of Supervisor's Review: *4/29/14*

Supervisor's Action: *Denial approved*

Supervisor's Comments:

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

**United States  
Coast Guard**



Director  
National Pollution Funds Center  
United States Coast Guard

NPFC CA MS 7100  
US COAST GUARD  
4200 Wilson Blvd. Suite 1000  
Arlington, VA 20598-7100  
Staff Symbol: (CA)  
Phone: 800-280-7118  
E-mail: arl-pf-npfcclaimsinfo@uscg.mil  
Fax: 703-872-6113

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
Number: 7013 3020 0000 7550 3619

5890/DWHZ  
29 April 2014

Ms. Stella Haynes  
[REDACTED]

Re: Claim Number: N10036-2024

Dear Ms. Haynes,

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 N10036-2024 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 N10036-2024.

Mail reconsideration requests to:

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

Sincerely  
[REDACTED]

Claims Re adjudication Division  
National Pollution Funds Center  
U.S. Coast Guard

Enclosure: Claim Summary/Determination