

CLAIM SUMMARY / DETERMINATION FORM

Date	: 9/1/2011
Claim Number	: 911114-0001
Claimant	: State of California
Type of Claimant	: State
Type of Claim	: Removal Costs
Claim Manager	: [REDACTED]
Amount Requested	: \$1,669.27

FACTS:

On July 4, 2005 at approximately 2315 hrs, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) received a report from the Orange County Sheriff that the vessel "WORSHIP" ran aground on Bolsa Chica State Beach. The vessel operator and his son were offshore watching a fireworks display when they started having engine problems. While doing so, the vessel drifted towards land and got caught in the breakers. Unable to get the engine started, the vessel ran aground on the beach. Officer [REDACTED] of California Department of Fish and Game (Claimant) responded to the scene in the early morning on July 5, 2005 to assess whether there was any release of fuel. An unknown amount of diesel fuel spilled onto the beach. The State Park staff was going to establish a clean up as the vessel was not able to be towed back to sea. Later that morning, Officer [REDACTED] was relieved by Officer [REDACTED] in the monitoring of the clean up.

CLAIM:

On August 25, 2011, the Claimant submitted a removal cost claim to the National Pollution Funds Center (NPFCC), for reimbursement of its uncompensated removal costs in the amount of \$1,669.27 for the services provided from July 4, 2005 through July 6, 2005.

This claim consists of copies of: the Optional OSLTF Claim Form; State of California Department of Fish and Game Office of Spill Prevention and Response cover letter dated August 16, 2011, Standard Form 1081, Summary of Costs sheet, Itemization of personnel and equipment used, timesheets, OSPR Daily Activity Report, OSPR Narrative Supplement, and OES Hazardous Materials Spill Report.

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 FOSC, and (4) whether the costs were adequately documented.

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. No FOSC coordination has been provided. 33 U.S.C. § 1321(d)(2)(K).

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. The claim was not submitted within the six year statute of limitations. 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(2)
4. The Responsible Party is unknown. 33 U.S.C. § 2701(32).
5. In accordance with 33 CFR § 136.105(e)(12), the claimant has certified no suit has been filed in court for the uncompensated removal costs claimed.

B. 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 Claims Manager validated the costs incurred and determined what was reasonable, necessary and performed in accordance with the National Contingency Plan (NCP).

Upon review of the claim submission, the NPFC notes that the Claimant has failed to provide FOSC coordination pursuant to the governing claims regulations found at 33 CFR 136.203 and the Claimant has failed to present their claim for removal costs to the NPFC within the six statute of limitations pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(2) and 33 CFR 136.101(a)(2).

C. Determined Amount:

The NPFC hereby determines this claim is denied because the Claimant failed to demonstrate (1) proper FOSC coordination pursuant to 33 CFR 136.203, and (2) failed to present their claim to the NPFC within the six year statute of limitations for removal costs claims pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 2712(h)(2) and 33 CFR 136.101(a)(2).

AMOUNT: \$0.00

Claim Supervisor: 

Date of Supervisor's review: 9/1/11

Supervisor Action: *Denial approved*