

“(1) In accordance with regulations promulgated under section 9651(c) of this title, damages for injury to, destruction of, or loss of natural resources resulting from a release of a hazardous substance, for the purposes of this chapter and section 1321(f)(4) and (5) of title 33, shall be assessed by Federal officials designated by the President under the national contingency plan published under section 9605 of this title, and such officials shall act for the President as trustee under this section and section 1321(f)(5) of title 33.

“(2) Any determination or assessment of damages for injury to, destruction of, or loss of natural resources for the purposes of this chapter and section 1321(f)(4) and (5) of title 33 shall have the force and effect of a rebuttable presumption on behalf of any claimant (including a trustee under section 9607 of this title or a Federal agency) in any judicial or adjudicatory administrative proceeding under this chapter or section 1321 of title 33.”

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 99-499, §207(d)(4), inserted “and by the governing body of any Indian tribe having sustained damage to natural resources belonging to, managed by, controlled by, or appertaining to such tribe, or held in trust for the benefit of such tribe, or belonging to a member of such tribe if such resources are subject to a trust restriction on alienation,” after “State.”

Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 99-499, §111(g), amended subsec. (k) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (k) read as follows: “The Inspector General of each department or agency to which responsibility to obligate money in the Fund is delegated shall provide an audit review team to audit all payments, obligations, reimbursements, or other uses of the Fund, to assure that the Fund is being properly administered and that claims are being appropriately and expeditiously considered. Each such Inspector General shall submit to the Congress an interim report one year after the establishment of the Fund and a final report two years after the establishment of the Fund. Each such Inspector General shall thereafter provide such auditing of the Fund as is appropriate. Each Federal agency shall cooperate with the Inspector General in carrying out this subsection.”

Subsecs. (m) to (p). Pub. L. 99-499, §111(h), (i), added subsecs. (m) to (p).

COORDINATION OF TITLES I TO IV OF PUB. L. 99-499

Any provision of titles I to IV of Pub. L. 99-499, imposing any tax, premium, or fee; establishing any trust fund; or authorizing expenditures from any trust fund, to have no force or effect, see section 531 of Pub. L. 99-499, set out as a note under section 1 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in sections 6924, 6991b, 6991c, 9601, 9604, 9607, 9608, 9609, 9612, 9619, 9661 of this title; title 26 section 9507.

§ 9612. Claims procedure

(a) Claims against Fund for response costs

No claim may be asserted against the Fund pursuant to section 9611(a) of this title unless such claim is presented in the first instance to the owner, operator, or guarantor of the vessel or facility from which a hazardous substance has been released, if known to the claimant, and to any other person known to the claimant who may be liable under section 9607 of this title. In any case where the claim has not been satisfied within 60 days of presentation in accordance with this subsection, the claimant may present the claim to the Fund for payment. No claim against the Fund may be approved or certified during the pendency of an action by the claimant in court to recover costs which are the subject of the claim.

(b) Forms and procedures applicable

(1) Prescribing forms and procedures

The President shall prescribe appropriate forms and procedures for claims filed hereunder, which shall include a provision requiring the claimant to make a sworn verification of the claim to the best of his knowledge. Any person who knowingly gives or causes to be given any false information as a part of any such claim shall, upon conviction, be fined in accordance with the applicable provisions of title 18 or imprisoned for not more than 3 years (or not more than 5 years in the case of a second or subsequent conviction), or both.

(2) Payment or request for hearing

The President may, if satisfied that the information developed during the processing of the claim warrants it, make and pay an award of the claim, except that no claim may be awarded to the extent that a judicial judgment has been made on the costs that are the subject of the claim. If the President declines to pay all or part of the claim, the claimant may, within 30 days after receiving notice of the President's decision, request an administrative hearing.

(3) Burden of proof

In any proceeding under this subsection, the claimant shall bear the burden of proving his claim.

(4) Decisions

All administrative decisions made hereunder shall be in writing, with notification to all appropriate parties, and shall be rendered within 90 days of submission of a claim to an administrative law judge, unless all the parties to the claim agree in writing to an extension or unless the President, in his discretion, extends the time limit for a period not to exceed sixty days.

(5) Finality and appeal

All administrative decisions hereunder shall be final, and any party to the proceeding may appeal a decision within 30 days of notification of the award or decision. Any such appeal shall be made to the Federal district court for the district where the release or threat of release took place. In any such appeal, the decision shall be considered binding and conclusive, and shall not be overturned except for arbitrary or capricious abuse of discretion.

(6) Payment

Within 20 days after the expiration of the appeal period for any administrative decision concerning an award, or within 20 days after the final judicial determination of any appeal taken pursuant to this subsection, the President shall pay any such award from the Fund. The President shall determine the method, terms, and time of payment.

(c) Subrogation rights; actions maintainable

(1) Payment of any claim by the Fund under this section shall be subject to the United States Government acquiring by subrogation the rights of the claimant to recover those costs of removal or damages for which it has com-

pensated the claimant from the person responsible or liable for such release.

(2) Any person, including the Fund, who pays compensation pursuant to this chapter to any claimant for damages or costs resulting from a release of a hazardous substance shall be subrogated to all rights, claims, and causes of action for such damages and costs of removal that the claimant has under this chapter or any other law.

(3) Upon request of the President, the Attorney General shall commence an action on behalf of the Fund to recover any compensation paid by the Fund to any claimant pursuant to this subchapter, and, without regard to any limitation of liability, all interest, administrative and adjudicative costs, and attorney's fees incurred by the Fund by reason of the claim. Such an action may be commenced against any owner, operator, or guarantor, or against any other person who is liable, pursuant to any law, to the compensated claimant or to the Fund, for the damages or costs for which compensation was paid.

(d) Statute of limitations

(1) Claims for recovery of costs

No claim may be presented under this section for recovery of the costs referred to in section 9607(a) of this title after the date 6 years after the date of completion of all response action.

(2) Claims for recovery of damages

No claim may be presented under this section for recovery of the damages referred to in section 9607(a) of this title unless the claim is presented within 3 years after the later of the following:

(A) The date of the discovery of the loss and its connection with the release in question.

(B) The date on which final regulations are promulgated under section 9651(c) of this title.

(3) Minors and incompetents

The time limitations contained herein shall not begin to run—

(A) against a minor until the earlier of the date when such minor reaches 18 years of age or the date on which a legal representative is duly appointed for the minor, or

(B) against an incompetent person until the earlier of the date on which such person's incompetency ends or the date on which a legal representative is duly appointed for such incompetent person.

(e) Other statutory or common law claims not waived, etc.

Regardless of any State statutory or common law to the contrary, no person who asserts a claim against the Fund pursuant to this subchapter shall be deemed or held to have waived any other claim not covered or assertable against the Fund under this subchapter arising from the same incident, transaction, or set of circumstances, nor to have split a cause of action. Further, no person asserting a claim against the Fund pursuant to this subchapter shall as a result of any determination of a ques-

tion of fact or law made in connection with that claim be deemed or held to be collaterally estopped from raising such question in connection with any other claim not covered or assertable against the Fund under this subchapter arising from the same incident, transaction, or set of circumstances.

(f) Double recovery prohibited

Where the President has paid out of the Fund for any response costs or any costs specified under section 9611(c)(1) or (2) of this title, no other claim may be paid out of the Fund for the same costs.

(Pub. L. 96-510, title I, § 112, Dec. 11, 1980, 94 Stat. 2792; Pub. L. 99-499, title I, §§ 109(a)(3), 112, Oct. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 1633, 1646.)

AMENDMENTS

1986—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 99-499, § 112(a), amended subsec. (a) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (a) read as follows: "All claims which may be asserted against the Fund pursuant to section 9611 of this title shall be presented in the first instance to the owner, operator, or guarantor of the vessel or facility from which a hazardous substance has been released, if known to the claimant, and to any other person known to the claimant who may be liable under section 9607 of this title. In any case where the claim has not been satisfied within sixty days of presentation in accordance with this subsection, the claimant may elect to commence an action in court against such owner, operator, guarantor, or other person or to present the claim to the Fund for payment."

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 99-499, § 112(b), added heading. Pub. L. 99-499, § 109(a)(3), substituted "in accordance with the applicable provisions of title 18 or imprisoned for not more than 3 years (or not more than 5 years in the case of a second or subsequent conviction), or both" for "up to \$5,000 or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both".

Subsec. (b)(2) to (6). Pub. L. 99-499, § 112(b), added pars. (2) to (6) and struck out former pars. (2) to (4) which related to the settlement and arbitration of claims against liable persons and against the Fund.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 99-499, § 112(c), amended subsec. (d) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (d) read as follows: "No claim may be presented, nor may an action be commenced for damages under this subchapter, unless that claim is presented or action commenced within three years from the date of the discovery of the loss or December 11, 1980, whichever is later: *Provided, however,* That the time limitations contained herein shall not begin to run against a minor until he reaches eighteen years of age or a legal representative is duly appointed for him, nor against an incompetent person until his incompetency ends or a legal representative is duly appointed for him."

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 99-499, § 112(d), added subsec. (f).

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SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in sections 9607, 9611 of this title.

§ 9613. Civil proceedings

(a) Review of regulations in Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States for the District of Columbia

Review of any regulation promulgated under this chapter may be had upon application by any