



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Office of Response and Restoration
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

FEB 13 2001

Honorable C. Bernard Fowler
Chair, Governor's Citizens Advisory Committee
P.O. Box 459
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

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AR: Chalk Point Oil Spill

Title: Letter (13 Feb. 2001). Jim Hoff to the
Honorable C. Bernard Fowler, re: Status of
NRD activities and request for technical experts

Dear Senator Fowler:

Since the April 7, 2000 spill of about 126,000 gallons of oil from a Pepco pipeline into Swanson Creek and the Patuxent River, the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (collectively, the natural resource trustees) have initiated a number of studies to determine the nature and extent of injuries resulting from the spill. The goal and objective of these efforts, as well as the details of the specific injury assessment study plans, were presented and reviewed during a workshop held at the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory with interested members of the scientific community in December 2000.

The trustees are now reviewing the injury assessment data and findings developed by the various principal investigators. Findings of measurable changes, once accepted by the trustees, will provide the basis for determining the type and amount of restoration that is necessary to compensate the public for their losses.

Trustees want to take appropriate steps to ensure that the injury assessment data and analyses presented by the principal investigators are technically sound and legally defensible under standards established by the Federal Oil Pollution Act (OPA). We, therefore, want to solicit your recommendations for specific individuals who could serve as qualified experts to review the Injury Assessment Reports. The trustees are seeking individuals with an understanding of the damage assessment process under the OPA and expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- (1) wetlands, with specific focus on ecology of tidal wetlands, oil impacts on wetlands, wetlands restoration and wetland monitoring techniques;
- (2) birds, particularly avian population biology, productivity studies and methods, wildlife toxicology, waterfowl ecology, monitoring of bird populations and census methods, and oil impacts on waterfowl;
- (3) water column resources, with specific knowledge of the composition and abundance, ecology and life histories of fish and shellfish in the spill area; as well as organism aquatic toxicology, chemistry and bioavailability of petroleum hydrocarbon compounds;
- (4) benthic resources, with specific expertise in estuarine benthic community ecology and the use of benthos as pollution indicators;



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(5) terrapins, with specific focus on turtle population biology; and

(6) muskrats, with specific experience with mammalian ecology/population biology wildlife toxicology, and census methods for estimating population density.

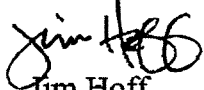
As part of the contractual arrangements necessary to compensate for the services of technical experts, the trustees will require a signed confidentiality agreement that recognizes that any information, opinions or advice sought could be used in future litigation and prohibits the expert from discussing any of the information or findings contained in the studies without approval from NOAA's Office of General Counsel.

We appreciate your assistance in identifying experts that meet the qualifications described above. Your recommendations, along with a statement of qualifications and resume for each qualified reviewer, should be sent to me by March 7, 2001 at the following address: NOAA Damage Assessment Center, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Please feel free to contact me at (301) 713-3038 ext. 188 if you have any questions about this request for assistance or the status of the trustees' natural resource damage assessment efforts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jim Hoff

NOAA Damage Assessment Center