

## SUBCHAPTER K—CONTINENTAL SHELF

### PART 296—FISHERMEN'S CONTINGENCY FUND

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AUTHORITY: Pub. L. 97-212 (43 U.S.C. 1841 et seq.).

SOURCE: 47 FR 49600, Nov. 1, 1982, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 296.1 Purpose.

These regulations implement title IV of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978, as amended (title IV). Title IV establishes a Fishermen's Contingency Fund to compensate commercial fishermen for damage or loss caused by obstructions associated with oil and gas activities on the Outer Continental Shelf.

#### § 296.2 Definitions.

*Area affected by Outer Continental Shelf activities* means the area within a 3-mile radius of any casualty site which:

(1) Includes any portion of a leased block, pipeline, easement, right of way, or other OCS oil and gas exploration, development, or production activity; or

(2) Is otherwise associated (as determined by the Chief, Financial Services Division) with OCS oil and gas activities, such as, for example, expired lease areas, relinquished rights-of-way or easements, and areas used extensively by surface vessels supporting OCS oil and gas activities (areas landward of the OCS are included when such areas meet this criterion).

*Chief, FSD* means Chief, Financial Services Division, National Marine

Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; telephone: (301) 713-2396.

*Citizen of the United States* means any person who is a United States citizen, any State, or any corporation, partnership, or association organized under the laws of any state which meets the requirements for documenting vessels in the U.S. coastwise trade.

*Commercial fisherman* means any citizen of the United States who owns, operates, or is employed on a commercial fishing vessel.

*Commercial fishing vessel* means any marine craft which is documented under the laws of the United States or, if under five net tons, registered under the laws of any State, and used for commercial fishing or activities directly related to commercial fishing.

*Easement* means a right of use or easement granted under 30 CFR 250.18.

*Fish* means all forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals, birds, and highly migratory species.

*Fishing gear* means any commercial fishing vessel, and any equipment of such vessel.

*Fund* means the Fishermen's Contingency Fund established by title IV of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978.

*Holder* means the owner of record of each lease, prelease exploratory drilling permit, easement, or right-of-way or any agent or assignee of an owner.

*Lease* means any authority under section 8 or section 6 of the OCS Lands Act to develop and produce or explore for oil or gas.

*Negligence or fault* includes, but is not limited to, failure to:

(1) Remain outside of any navigation safety zone established around oil and gas rigs and platforms by any responsible Federal agency;

(2) Avoid obstructions recorded on nautical charts or in the Notice to Mariners or marked by a buoy or other surface marker (casualties occurring within a one-quarter mile radius of obstructions so recorded or marked are presumed to involve negligence or fault of the claimant);

(3) Abide by established rules of the road;

(4) Use proper care; or

(5) Use due care and diligence to mitigate the damage or loss.

*Outer Continental Shelf* means all submerged lands lying seaward and outside of the area of lands beneath navigable waters as defined in 43 U.S.C. section 1301, and of which the subsoil and seabed appertain to the United States and are subject to its jurisdiction and control. Generally, but not in all cases, this includes all submerged lands lying seaward of the territorial sea (3 miles from a State's coastline, or 9 miles from the coast of Texas or Florida).

*Person* means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, public or private organization, government, or other entity.

*Resulting Economic Loss* means the gross income, as estimated by the Chief, FSD, that a claimant will lose because of not being able to fish, or having to reduce fishing effort, during the period before the damaged or lost fishing gear concerned is repaired or replaced and available for use. This period must be reasonable. This period begins on the date of the casualty and stops on the date the damage could reasonably have been remedied by repair or replacement.

*Right-of-way* means any right-of-way granted under section 5(e) of the OCS Lands Act or under 43 CFR 3340.0-5.

*Secretary* means the Secretary of Commerce or his designee.

[47 FR 49600, Nov. 1, 1982, as amended at 61 FR 6322, Feb. 20, 1996]

### § 296.3 Fishermen's contingency fund.

(a) *General.* There is established in the Treasury of the United States the Fishermen's Contingency Fund. The Fund is available without fiscal year limitation as a revolving fund to carry out the purposes of title IV of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978, as amended.

(b) *Payments into the fund.* Each Holder of an exploration permit, lease, easement, or rights-of-way for the construction of a pipeline, or a prelease exploration drilling permit issued or maintained under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, in effect on or after June 30, 1982, shall pay assess-

ments to the Fund. All pipeline right-of-way and easements are to be included for assessment except those constructed and operated lines within the confines of a single lease or group of contiguous leases under unitized operation or single operator. Payments will not be required for geological or geophysical permits, other than prelease exploratory drilling permits issued under section 11 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1340).

(1) *Assessments to maintain the fund.* When the total amount in the Fund is less than the Chief, FSD, determines is needed to pay Fund claims and expenses, the Chief, FSD, will notify the Secretary of the Interior that additional assessments are needed.

(2) *Billing and collections.* The Secretary of the Interior will calculate the amounts to be paid by each Holder and shall notify each Holder of the dollar amount and the time and place for all payments. Each assessment shall be paid to the Secretary of the Interior no later than 45 days after the Secretary of the Interior sends notice of the assessment.

(3) *Annual assessment limits.* No Holder shall be required to pay in excess of \$5,000 for any lease, permit, easement or right-of-way in any calendar year.

(c) *Moneys recovered through subrogation.* Any moneys recovered by the Secretary through the subrogation of a claimant's rights shall be deposited into the Fund.

(d) *Investments of the fund.* Excess sums in the Fund will be invested in obligations of, or guaranteed by, the United States. Revenue from such investments shall be deposited in the Fund.

(e) *Litigation.* The Fund may sue and be sued in its own name.

### § 296.4 Claims eligible for compensation.

(a) *Claimants.* Damage or loss eligible for Fund compensation must be suffered by a commercial fisherman.

(b) *Damage or loss of fishing gear.* Damage or loss is eligible for Fund compensation if it was caused by materials, equipment, tools, containers, or other items associated with OCS oil and gas exploration, development, or production activities. Damage or loss