

## **REGION II REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM 2005 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Period of Report: January 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005**

Mr. Joe Laforvara  
Executive Director  
National Response Team  
USEPA Headquarters - MC 5104A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Laforvara:

As required by Section 300.115 of the National Contingency Plan, the Region II Regional Response Team Report is submitted for the period of January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

### **I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. MAJOR/NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

SPRING 2005 NEW JERSEY FLOODS: In early April 2005, an Incident Specific RRT was activated via teleconference to provide technical assistance and information dissemination in response to a flooding event in Mercer County, NJ. The impacted area was minimal, and no federal disaster was declared. EPA utilized both CERCLA and OPA funding to remove hazardous substances and to mitigate oil issues.

#### **B. RRT MEETINGS**

##### SPRING:

RRT II met February 23-24, 2005 at the Sheraton Hotel in Edison, NJ. The meeting focused on lessons learned from recent significant events including the M/V ATHOS I spill in Delaware Bay, the potential biological hazard in containers of lemons on board the M/V RIO PUELO, and the Republican National Convention. A break-out session with Co-Chairs, state representatives and FOSCs was held after the full RRT II meeting was adjourned. This break-out provided an excellent opportunity to discuss items that members may not want to discuss during the full session.

##### FALL:

RRT II had scheduled a meeting for November 2005, but decided to cancel the meeting due to ongoing Hurricane Katrina deployments. The Spring 2006 meeting is tentatively scheduled for May, and will be held in conjunction with an oil spill seminar hosted by the Long Island Sound Area Committee.

#### **C. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT WORKGROUP: Representatives from the First Coast Guard

District, EPA Region II, Sector New York and the states of New York and New Jersey met to revise the existing boundary between EPA and USCG FOSC jurisdiction. Changes made to the boundary include a major restructuring of the boundary in the five boroughs of New York City. The agreement also includes a template for transferring FOSC authority between agencies when the majority of an area impacted by oil or hazardous material would better suit the expertise of the other agency. The boundary agreement is expected to be finalized prior to the May 2006 RRT meeting.

## **II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING**

### **A. TRAINING**

DISPERSANT SEMINAR: RRT II hosted a Dispersant Seminar on September 27-28, 2005 in Edison, NJ. The seminar, given by Ecosystem Management Associates, Inc., gave participants from the USCG, EPA, NYSDEC, NJDEP, DE FWS, and DE DNREC a background on dispersants, case studies, decision-making process, and current planning efforts for applying dispersants to an oil spill. The seminar was well-received by all attendees.

### **B. EXERCISES/WORKSHOPS**

TOPOFF 3 (TOP OFFICIALS) EXERCISE: TOPOFF 3 was a five-day, full-scale exercise conducted 4-8 April 2005 at two state venues (CT and NJ), as well as with international partners (Canada and UK). TOPOFF-3 provided the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal departments and agencies with the first opportunity to test and validate the recently released National Response Plan (NRP) and to exercise protocols of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Over 200 federal, state, local, tribal, private sector, and international agencies and organizations, as well as volunteer groups participated in the exercise. The TOPOFF 3 exercise scenario included a biological agent incident in New Jersey, a chemical agent and high-yield explosive incident in Connecticut and the United Kingdom, and post-incident effects of biological incident in the United States and Canada.

The New Jersey Biological release of *Yersinia-pestis*, or Pneumonic Plague, did not activate National Response System entities in Region II. However, all environmental agencies were standing by to assist the responders as needed. EPA and USCG representatives staffed ESF #10 at the JFO in New Jersey; however, few requests were received for assistance. A USCG representative staffed the NJ State EOC and FBI JOC, as well a USCG Incident Management Team at Sector New York to meet USCG information reporting requirements. Significant ESF-10 activity was occurring in neighboring Region I in response to an aerial sulfur mustard release scenario.

### **C. FEDERAL, STATE, and LOCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION EFFORTS**

AREA CONTINGENCY PLAN UPDATES: In 2005, USCG Area Contingency Plans were updated in accordance with guidance from USCG Headquarters. Three updates were made to the plans including: alignment with the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System,

the addition of a list of scientists as required by the Chaffee Amendments, and conversion to ICS format. Further updates will be required within the next few years to improve the plans.

### **III. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

- Mr. Bruce Sprague, EPA RRT II Co-Chair retired from the EPA in January 2006, after over 30 years of federal service. Mr. Eric Mosher is serving as the Acting Co-Chair until the position is permanently filled.
- CAPT Mark VanHaverbeke, USCG Region I and II RRT Co-Chair, retired in May 2005. CAPT Mary Landry assumed the role of Co-Chair until December 1, 2005 when the USCG First District office reorganized. The Co-Chair responsibility now resides with the USCG First District Chief of the Response, CAPT Mark Landry.
- CAPT Scott Ferguson assumed command of Sector Buffalo from CDR Paul Gugg.
- CAPT David Scott assumed command of Sector Delaware Bay from CAPT Jonathan Sarubbi.

### **IV. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION:**

**A. COMMON INTERAGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY:** The need for a common interagency response technology, highlighted during TOPOFF 3, needs to be addressed at the national level. Under the NRP, agencies will respond using the principles of NIMS. There are common paper tools used under NIMS, but no common information technology applications or common protocols to support NIMS.

**B. SMART RAD:** The SMART-RAD effort initiated at the NY/NJ Area Committee level should be considered for national adoption by the group that maintains the existing SMART protocols.

### **V. FUTURE PLANS.**

**NEXT RRT II MEETING:** The next Region II meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 2006 and will be held in conjunction with an Oil Spill Seminar hosted by the Long Island Sound Area Committee. Location and exact dates are still to be determined.

### **CONCURRENCE:**

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Eric Mosher (Date)  
Acting EPA Co-Chair  
US EPA, Region II

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Captain Mark Landry (Date)  
U.S. Coast Guard Co-Chair  
First Coast Guard District