

Mystery spill (2017)

Location: Port de Québec, Québec, QC

Case number: 120-719-C1-1

The Incident

On March 8, 2017, the Harbor Master's Office of the Port of Quebec advised the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) that an oil spill, possibly from the bulk carrier *M/V Maccoa*, had occurred in section 28. Oil was discovered on the water, on ice between the wharf and the ship, as well as traces on the wharf and splashing on the hull of the ship.

Transport Canada and CCG estimated that between 30 and 40 litres of heavy fuel oil or sludge used oil have been dumped into the harbor. During this time, two safety inspectors of Transport Canada collected samples from outside the *Maccoa* as well as from its tanks. A local surveyor firm was tasked on scene by the shipowner.

The CCG gradually dispatched five members of its personnel, who monitored oil recovery measures taken by the Eastern Canada Response Corporation (ECRC), hired by the Quebec Port Authority (QPA).

The master of the *Maccoa* denied that the oil came from his ship; the ship remained detained. The Quebec Port Authority obtained a Letter of Undertaking from the ship's P&I Club (UK Club). CCG Environmental Response (ER) personnel began to support the pollution recovery and clean-up operations of the Port of Quebec, carried out by ECRC.

On March 9, 2017, the source of the pollution had not yet been identified, the operation was underway to melt the ice and recover hydrocarbons with absorbents. The hull cleaning operations took place in the afternoon. The vessel wanted to continue operations, but the CCG ER ban was maintained until the clean-up was completed. Pollution recovery was completed at between 80 and 90 percent, according to an estimate from the CCG on-site team.

On March 10, 2017, the vessel was allowed to sail. However, at 9:30 am, after the ship's departure, a black sheen was observed in the mouth of the Saint-Charles River in the Port of Quebec. The CCG ER team remobilized to sample and prepare equipment, and organized an aerial observation to find the source of the hydrocarbons. Following the investigation, no contamination was observed. The large black sheen at the mouth of the St. Charles River turned out to have been created by the reflection of the new ice on the water.

CCG mobilized resources until it was confirmed that the sheen was not oil.

The Claim

On February 12, 2019, CCG on behalf of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO/CCG) filed a claim with the Administrator for costs and expenses incurred in the amount of \$11,139.48, pursuant to section 103 of the *Marine Liability Act*.

As of March 31, 2019, the Administrator was still investigating the claim.

Status

The file remains open.