

For Immediate Release



OPA 90 Forum

Best Response and Environmental Protection from OPA 90, Focus of the new OPA 90 Forum

Washington D.C. November 17, 2021 – Leaders representing many aspects of the energy, maritime, response and environmental community announce the establishment of the OPA 90 Forum. The vision of this newly formed organization is to preserve and enhance the intent of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and provide a forum for those concerned with OPA 90 preparedness, prevention, and response. Continuing the effectiveness of OPA 90 in reducing the number and severity of incidents and increasing the effectiveness of response.

For more than 30 years OPA 90 has set the gold standard for global marine casualty and oil spill preparedness and response for all industries regulated by OPA 90. Establishing processes, standards, and unified leadership, to not only speed the response to oil spill incidents in the waters of the United States, but to meaningfully reduce the number of such incidents. While a U.S. law, the Act has fostered a response capability around the globe, contributing significantly to the reduction of incidents and improving coordinated response among the legion of operational, environmental, scientific, insurance and command professionals in government and industry.

The OPA 90 Forum intends to work collaboratively with OPA 90 regulated industry, their representative trade associations, Federal regulatory agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the environmental science community, emergency response management, and the critical assets of the first responders, and the vital insurance and legal communities to ensure the best practices developed over the past 30 years continue to flourish.

The Act has succeeded in achieving its fundamental purpose, but the marine environment is faced with numerous developments, some key to the future of renewable energy, such as large-scale offshore wind farms that were not contemplated or imagined in 1990. Threats from cybersecurity attacks on critical infrastructure, with the potential to impact vessels, tank farms, pipelines, ports, and terminals, were not contemplated in an Act originally designed to respond to mechanical failure, human error, or natural disasters as the source of oil spills. But, by

incorporating the principles of OPA 90 of prevention, preparedness, and response to these new hazards we create a safer environment for the future.

Joseph Cox, President Emeritus, Chamber of Shipping of America, is the Chairman of the OPA 90 Forum. Judith Roos, whose professional career has touched many critical components of OPA 90, is the Vice Chair.

Commenting on the launch of the OPA 90 Forum, Joe Cox noted, "The OPA 90 regulated industries should be rightfully proud of the enormous environmental protection strides taken since OPA 90 was enacted. We look forward to working with every element of this community to see that the best practices learned are nurtured, shared, and enhanced. If we are to take full advantage of the US marine environment for the growth and security of our nation's energy and transportation future, a strong environmental protection and response capability is key."

The Forum will independently, and collectively with industry partners, tackle issues unimagined in 1990, such as cybersecurity and climate change. It will also look to shore up signs of wear and tear which is natural in any large-scale endeavor such as OPA 90. These may include ensuring that responses are timely and that responsible service providers are protected in their response roles under federal law and inconsistencies identified in exercises, processes, and training are rectified to the benefit of government and industry alike. The Forum will serve as a repository to retain knowledge and a mechanism to share that knowledge with a new generation of individuals in government and industry.

The goal and mission are simple, to work collaboratively across industry and government for the protection of the navigable waters of the US and the environment we must, and desire to, protect.

More information on the OPA 90 Forum and membership may be found at www.opa90forum.org.

For further information, Contact:
Joseph Cox Tel. 202 669-4441
Judith Roos Tel. 703 509 1510
