



AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION NEWS RELEASE
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AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION PRESENTS RAPID RESPONSE
AWARDS AT 10th ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Arlington, VA – The American Salvage Association (ASA) awarded its Rapid Response Award on November 1, 2010 to Congressman Elijah E. Cummings, Chairman of the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee; James T. Shirley, ASA’s Legal Counsel; and Edmund Welch, Legislative Director of the Passenger Vessel Association and former Capitol Hill staff member on the former House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, who worked to create initial Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) legislation after the Exxon Valdez spill. All three received the awards for their efforts to include salvor immunity in regulatory changes to OPA 90 being addressed as a result of the Deepwater Horizon spill on the Gulf Coast.

The Deepwater Horizon/BP Spill prompted Congress to consider a number of regulatory changes to oil pollution legislation. Upon recommendation by Mr. Welch, with previously significant input from Mr. Shirley, and with agreement from the ASA Leadership, letters were sent on July 2nd to Congressman Elijah Cummings, Chairman, House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, and to Senator Barbara Mikulski, Chairwoman, Senate Subcommittee on Science, Justice and Commerce asking for consideration of a statutory change to OPA 90 that would clarify and include salvor immunity.

“... the professional marine salvage industry has long been concerned about the risk to salvors of being held liable for accidental oil or hazardous chemical spills that may occur during the course of their services. We believe this concern should be alleviated in order to encourage prompt and efficient response to all such casualties by those best able to provide this important environmental protection,” the letters stated.

At the end of July, the House published the final version of H.R. 3534, the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources Act 5 of 2010, and, as a result of the efforts and support of Chairman Cummings, the salvage amendment was contained in Section 733 of the bill. The

Senate did not address its version of the Energy/Oil Pollution Bill upon return from its August recess, however.

The Rapid Response Awards were presented in Linthicum, Maryland, at ASA's Fall Membership Meeting luncheon celebrating the 10th anniversary of ASA's founding.

"The ASA is delighted to recognize Congressman Cummings, Jim Shirley and Ed Welch for their efforts to try to move forward legislation to protect salvors working to protect life, property and the environment in a professional emergency salvage or oil spill response," said ASA President Mauricio Garrido, who bestowed the awards.

The American Salvage Association is a trade association promoting professionalism and improving marine casualty response in North American coastal and inland waters.