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### Local Government Experiences with Responsible Party Disasters: Lessons Learned from Oil Spills and Toxic Fires

Orange County, California has significant experience in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Indeed, the County has been included in over 23 federally declared emergencies/disasters in the last 20 years and is rated as 'Very High' (99.78) in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Risk Index. Fortunately, this has inspired local government to build and maintain robust processes for collaborative inter-jurisdictional and inter-disciplinary planning, training, and exercises. The local governments strive to incorporate State and Federal disaster mitigation, response, and recovery guidance, which historically resulted in high levels of compliance and rates of cost recovery from FEMA Public Assistance programs.

From 2021 to 2024, the County experienced three disasters that challenged these previously developed response and recovery plans: two marine oil spills and a toxic fire at a historic military (Navy and Marines) hangar. In each case, a 'Responsible Party' (RP) was identified. For the oil spills, the RPs were private sector entities. For the Navy Hangar Fire, it was the federal government. For each incident, the existence of an RP changed both how the incident response structure operated and how the financial recovery processes functioned.

The proposed poster will present information on each incident and highlight

considerations local jurisdictions may wish to incorporate into their response and recovery plans when Responsible Parties are identified.

**Presentation Theme:** Local government response and recovery considerations when disasters have designated Responsible Parties

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