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By: Daniel J. Harrison Deputy Attorney General (609) 376-2735

Counsel for Plaintiffs New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Administrator of the New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund

# IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

	)
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	)
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF	)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, and	)
ADMINISTRATOR, NEW JERSEY SPILL	)
COMPENSATION FUND	)
Plaintiffs,	) )
v.	) Civil Action No
	)
HERCULES LLC,	)
Defendant.	)
	)

#### **COMPLAINT**

The United States of America, by authority of the Attorney General of the United States and through the undersigned attorney, acting at the request of the Regional Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") for Region II, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ("NJDEP"), and the Administrator of the New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund ("Administrator") by and through the New Jersey Attorney General file this complaint and allege as follows:

### **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1. This is a civil action brought under to Sections 106 and 107 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as

amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9606 & 9607 ("CERCLA"), and the New Jersey Spill Compensation and Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11 to -23.24 ("the Spill Act").

- 2. The United States seeks injunctive relief and recovery of costs incurred in response to releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances into the environment at or from the Hercules, Inc. Superfund Site ("Site"), located in Gibbstown, Gloucester County, New Jersey.
- 3. NJDEP and the Administrator of the New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund seek certain injunctive relief and the reimbursement of costs they have incurred and will incur for the discharge of hazardous substances at the Site.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 4. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action and over the parties under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1345 and Sections 106, 107, and 113(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9606, 9607 & 9613(b).
- 5. Venue is proper in this judicial district under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) and Sections 106(a) and 113(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9606(a) & 9613(b), because the releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that gave rise to this claim occurred in this district, and because the Site is located in this district.

#### THE PARTIES

6. The United States is authorized to seek costs of removal or remedial action, as well as injunctive relief necessary to abate the imminent and substantial

endangerment to the public health or welfare, or the environment, that may result from an actual or threatened release or threatened release of a hazardous substance at or from a facility. 42 U.S.C. §§ 9606(a), 9607(a).

- 7. NJDEP is a principal department within the Executive Branch of the State of New Jersey, vested with the authority to conserve and protect natural resources, protect the environment, prevent pollution, and protect the public health and safety. N.J.S.A. 13:1D-9.
- 8. The Administrator is the chief executive officer of the New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund ("the Spill Fund"). N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11j. As chief executive officer of the Spill Fund, the Administrator is authorized to approve and pay any cleanup and removal costs Plaintiff NJDEP incurs, N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11f.c & .d, and to certify the amount of any claim to be paid from the Spill Fund, N.J.S.A. 58:10-23-11j.d.
- 9. Defendant Hercules LLC ("Hercules") is a limited liability corporation organized under the laws of the State of Delaware, with headquarters located at 1313 North Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware, 19894, and is a "person" as defined in Section 101(21) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(21).
  - 10. At relevant times, Hercules owned and operated the Site.

#### **STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

- 11. CERCLA was enacted in 1980 to provide a comprehensive governmental mechanism for abating releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances and other pollutants and contaminants, and for funding the costs of such abatement and related enforcement activities, which are known as "response" actions, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9604(a), 9601(25).
  - 12. Section 104(a)(1) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9604(a)(1), provides:

Whenever (A) any hazardous substance is released or there is a substantial threat of such a release into the environment, or (B) there is a release or substantial threat of release into the environment of any pollutant or contaminant which may present an imminent and substantial danger to the public health or welfare, the President is authorized to act, consistent with the national contingency plan, to remove or arrange for the removal of, and provide for remedial action relating to such hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant at any time (including its removal from any contaminated natural resource), or take any other response measure consistent with the national contingency plan which the President deems necessary to protect the public health or welfare or the environment.

13. Section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a), provides in pertinent part:

Notwithstanding any other provision or rule of law, and subject only to the defenses set forth in subsection (b) of this Section –

(1) the owner and operator of a vessel or a facility, [and]

(2) any person who at the time of disposal of any hazardous substance owned or operated any facility at which such hazardous substances were disposed of,

\* \* \*

shall be liable for –

- (A) all costs of removal or remedial action incurred by the United States Government . . . not inconsistent with the National Contingency Plan . . . .
- 14. Under Section 106(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9606(a), the United States is also authorized to seek injunctive relief necessary to abate the imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or welfare, or the environment, that may result from an actual or threatened release of a hazardous substance at or from a facility.

## **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

- 15. The Site consists of about 350 acres located in Gibbstown, Gloucester County, New Jersey. To manage cleanup operations of the Site, EPA has divided response actions for the Site into portions referred to as "Operable Units."
- 16. Operable Units 1 and 2 consists of response actions identified in an EPA decision document, dated September 25, 2018, referred to as the Operable Units 1 and 2 Record of Decision. The response actions for Operable Units 1 and

2 address contamination in groundwater, soil, sediments, and surface water in specified areas at the Site.

- 17. The Site is a "facility" as defined in Section 101(9) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(9).
- 18. There has been a "release" or a "threatened release" of "hazardous substances" into the "environment" at or from the Site, as those terms are defined in Section 101 of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9601.
- 19. In undertaking response actions to address the release or threat of release of hazardous substances at the Site, EPA has incurred and will continue to incur "response costs" as defined in Section 101(25) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(25). The response costs incurred thus far were incurred in a manner not inconsistent with the National Contingency Plan, promulgated under Section 105 of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9605, and codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 300.

#### FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Cost Recovery Under CERCLA Section 107

- 20. Paragraphs 1 through 19 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.
- 21. Hercules is liable under Section 107(a)(2) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a)(2), because it owned or operated a facility at the Site at the time hazardous substances were disposed of at the facility.

- 22. Hercules is liable under Section 107(a)(1) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a)(1), because it owns the Site.
- 23. Under Section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a), Hercules is jointly and severally liable for all Operable Units 1 and 2 costs incurred by the United States, including enforcement costs and interest.

#### **SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

Injunctive Relief Under CERCLA Section 106

- 24. Paragraphs 1 through 23 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.
- 25. EPA has determined that there is or may be an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health and welfare or the environment because of actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances at or from the Site.
- 26. EPA has determined that the response actions selected in the Operable Units 1 and 2 Record of Decision are necessary to abate the danger or threat at or from the Site.
- 27. Under Section 106(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9606(a), Hercules is jointly and severally liable for injunctive relief to abate the danger or threat presented by a release or threatened release of hazardous substances into the environment at or from the Site.

28. Under Section 106(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9606(a), Hercules is jointly and severally liable to undertake the Operable Units 1 and 2 response actions as described in the Operable Units 1 and 2 Record of Decision.

#### THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Cost Recovery Under the Spill Act

- 29. Paragraphs 1 through 28 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.
- 30. Except as otherwise provided in N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11g12, any person who "has discharged a hazardous substance, or is in any way responsible for any hazardous substance" that is discharged, shall be liable, jointly and severally, without regard to fault, for all cleanup and removal costs no matter by whom incurred. N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11g.c.(1).
- 31. Except as otherwise exempted under N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11g.12, the discharge of hazardous substances is a violation of the Spill Act, for which any person who is the discharger of, or is in any way responsible for, any hazardous substance that is discharged, is strictly liable, jointly and severally. N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11g.c.(1).
- 32. NJDEP has incurred, and may continue to incur, costs as a result of the discharge of hazardous substances at the Site.
- 33. The costs that NJDEP has incurred and will incur for the Site are "cleanup and removal costs" within the meaning of N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11b.

- 34. Hercules is a "person" within the meaning of N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11b.
- 35. Hercules is a discharger and also a person that is in any way responsible for the discharged hazardous substances, and is liable, jointly and severally, without regard to fault, for all cleanup and removal costs that NJDEP has incurred, and will incur, as a result of the discharge of hazardous substances at the Site. N.J.S.A. 58.10-23.11g.c.(1).

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court:

- a. Enter judgment in favor of Plaintiffs and against the Defendant, jointly and severally, under Section 107(a)(4)(A) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(a)(4)(A), for unreimbursed response costs incurred by the United States relating to Operable Units 1 and 2, including enforcement costs and prejudgment interest, but excluding costs that are to be reimbursed under previously entered into administrative orders on consent;
- b. Enter an order under Section 106 of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9606(a), requiring the Defendant to perform the Operable Units 1 and 2 response actions as described in the Operable Units 1 and 2 Record of Decision;
- c. Enter a declaratory judgment on Defendant's liability that will be binding in any subsequent action for further response costs, pursuant to Section 113(g)(2) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9613(g)(2);

- d. Order the Defendant to reimburse Plaintiffs NJDEP and the Administrator, jointly and severally, without regard to fault, for all cleanup and removal costs Plaintiffs NJDEP and the Administrator have incurred at the Site, with applicable interest;
- e. Enter declaratory judgment against the Defendant, jointly and severally, without regard to fault, for all cleanup and removal costs Plaintiffs NJDEP and the Administrator may incur at the Site; and
  - f. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

JONATHAN D. BRIGHTBILL

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Environment and Natural Resources Division United States Department of Justice

September 28, 2020 Dated s/ Patrick B. Bryan
PATRICK B. BRYAN

Senior Attorney

**Environmental Enforcement Section** 

**Environment and Natural Resources Division** 

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September 28, 2020 Dated <u>s/ Daniel J. Harrison by Patrick B. Bryan</u>DANIEL J. HARRISONDeputy Attorney General

Counsel for Plaintiffs New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Administrator of the New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund

#### OF COUNSEL:

WILLIAM J. REILLY, JR. Assistant Regional Counsel U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2 290 Broadway, 17th Floor New York, NY 10007 (212) 637-3154

#### CERTIFICATION UNDER LOCAL CIVIL RULE 11.2

In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I certify that the matter in controversy in the foregoing Complaint is not the subject of any other action pending in any court, or any pending arbitration or administrative proceeding.

s/ Patrick B. Bryan
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JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

# Case 1:20-cv-13377 Document 1-1 Filed 09/28/20 Page 1 of 2 PageID: 14 CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		DEFENDANTS		
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff  (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)  (c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.  Attorneys (If Known)		
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	One Box Only)	I. CITIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government)		(For Diversity Cases Only)	<b>TF DEF</b> 1 □ 1 Incorporated <i>or</i> Pr of Business In T	and One Box for Defendant)  PTF DEF  incipal Place
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	2	
			Citizen or Subject of a   Foreign Country	3	□ 6 □ 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	[ (Place an "X" in One Box Or	ıly)	1 oreign Country	Click here for: Nature	of Suit Code Descriptions.
CONTRACT	TO	ORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
☐ 110 Insurance ☐ 120 Marine ☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument ☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment ☐ 151 Medicare Act ☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) ☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits ☐ 160 Stockholders' Suits ☐ 190 Other Contract ☐ 195 Contract Product Liability ☐ 196 Franchise   REAL PROPERTY ☐ 210 Land Condemnation ☐ 220 Foreclosure ☐ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment ☐ 240 Torts to Land ☐ 245 Tort Product Liability ☐ 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  □ 310 Airplane □ 315 Airplane Product Liability □ 320 Assault, Libel & Slander □ 330 Federal Employers' Liability □ 340 Marine □ 345 Marine Product Liability □ 350 Motor Vehicle □ 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability □ 360 Other Personal Injury □ 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice  CIVIL RIGHTS □ 440 Other Civil Rights □ 441 Voting □ 442 Employment □ 443 Housing/ Accommodations □ 445 Amer. w/Disabilities -	PERSONAL INJURY  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability  367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability  368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability  PERSONAL PROPERTY  370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability  PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty	□ 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 □ 690 Other  LABOR □ 710 Fair Labor Standards Act □ 720 Labor/Management Relations □ 740 Railway Labor Act □ 751 Family and Medical Leave Act □ 790 Other Labor Litigation □ 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act  IMMIGRATION	□ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157  PROPERTY RIGHTS □ 820 Copyrights □ 830 Patent □ 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application □ 840 Trademark  SOCIAL SECURITY □ 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 862 Black Lung (923) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 864 SSID Title XVI □ 865 RSI (405(g))  FEDERAL TAX SUITS □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	□ 375 False Claims Act □ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC
	Employment  446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other  448 Education	Other:      540 Mandamus & Other     550 Civil Rights     555 Prison Condition     560 Civil Detainee -     Conditions of     Confinement	□ 462 Naturalization Application □ 465 Other Immigration Actions		
		Remanded from 4 Appellate Court		erred from	
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO		<u> </u>	ling (Do not cite jurisdictional stat	tutes unless diversity):	
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.	DEMAND \$	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND:	if demanded in complaint:
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER	
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATTOR	NEY OF RECORD		
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY					
	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP	JUDGE	MAG. JUE	DGE

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- **I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
  - (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
  - (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- **II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
  - United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.
  - Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
  - Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- **III. Residence** (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- **IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: <a href="Nature of Suit Code Descriptions">Nature of Suit Code Descriptions</a>.
- **V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.
  - Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.
  - Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
  - Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
  - Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date. Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
  - Multidistrict Litigation Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407.
  - Multidistrict Litigation Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7.** Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statue.
- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction. Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

**Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

Date:

UNITED STATES DISTRICT	г Court
for the	
District of	

for the				
District of				
Plaintiff	No.			
SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION				
To: (Defendant's name and address)				
A lawsuit has been filed against you.				
Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:				
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for You also must file your answer or motion with the court.	for the relief demanded in the complaint.			
CLERK C	OF COURT			

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

AO 440 (Rev. 12/09) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No.

#### PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

	This summons for (nan	me of individual and title, if any)			
was re	ceived by me on (date)				
	☐ I personally served	the summons on the individu	aal at (place)		
	-		on (date)	; or	
	☐ I left the summons	at the individual's residence of	or usual place of abode with (name)		
		, a perso	on of suitable age and discretion who resid	les there,	
	on (date)	, and mailed a copy	to the individual's last known address; or		
	☐ I served the summe	ons on (name of individual)		, who is	
	designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of (name of organization)				
			on (date)	; or	
	☐ I returned the sum	mons unexecuted because		; or	
	☐ Other ( <i>specify</i> ):				
	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$		
	I declare under penalt	y of perjury that this informat	ion is true.		
Date:			g , , ,		
			Server's signature		
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			Server's address		

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: