

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 32

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES KERTTULA, Cissna, Croft, Kapsner, Moses, Davies, Morgan, Grussendorf, Berkowitz

Introduced: 3/24/99

Referred: Community and Regional Affairs, Judiciary, Finance

A RESOLUTION

**1 Requesting Exxon Corporation to pay claimants for damages resulting from the
2 Exxon Valdez oil spill.**

3 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

4 WHEREAS, on March 24, 1989, at 12:04 a.m., the Exxon Valdez oil tanker grounded
5 on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound, resulting in the spill of 11,000,000 gallons of North
6 Slope crude oil along 1,300 miles of Alaska shoreline; following the spill, Exxon Corporation
7 officials pledged to make Alaska whole again; and

8 WHEREAS the spill killed an estimated 250,000 birds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbor
9 seals, 250 bald eagles, killer whales, and many shoreline plants and animals, affected
10 innumerable salmon and herring eggs, and caused long-term injury to the environment of
11 Prince William Sound; and

12 WHEREAS, on September 16, 1994, an Alaska jury in the federal district court
13 returned a \$5,000,000,000 punitive damages verdict against Exxon Corporation to help
14 compensate those affected by the spill; and

15 WHEREAS, between 1994 and 1996, the federal district court denied numerous
16 motions from Exxon Corporation to overturn or adjust the verdict, and the corporation

1 continues to file motions to delay the case and escape payments to Alaskans; and

2 **WHEREAS**, between 1996 and today, Exxon Corporation has appealed for, and has
3 been denied, new trials; and

4 **WHEREAS** oral arguments begin this year on Exxon Corporation's appeal of the
5 denial of its second motion for a new trial and, if this appeal is denied, the company may file
6 a petition for further review to the United States Supreme Court, possibly adding another year
7 to the litigation; and

8 **WHEREAS** Exxon Corporation has prospered financially in the 10 years since the oil
9 spill, and the company is preparing to merge with Mobil Corporation to create the largest
10 corporation in the world, with multi-billion dollar revenues each year; and

11 **WHEREAS**, nearly five years after the jury verdict and a decade after the oil spill,
12 40,000 claimants, including commercial fishermen, business owners, landowners, and Native
13 corporations are still waiting for the \$5,000,000,000 in punitive damages; 500 claimants have
14 died between 1989 and 1999; and

15 **WHEREAS** most of the 40,000 claimants who are owed punitive damages are working
16 men and women with families, homes, mortgages, businesses, and roots in Alaska and its
17 future; and

18 **WHEREAS** the petroleum industry plays an important role in providing revenue,
19 employment, and economic stability for Alaska; and

20 **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature encourages development, through incentives
21 and partnerships with the petroleum industry whenever possible; and

22 **WHEREAS** British Petroleum Amoco and Atlantic Richfield Corporation have created
23 partnerships with, and invested in, responsible, environmentally sound resource development
24 and exploration, local and state governments, nonprofit organizations, and the growing trust
25 of the people of Alaska; and

26 **WHEREAS**, in order to foster partnerships between Exxon Corporation and the people
27 of Alaska, Exxon Corporation should make good on its promise and pay its debt to the people
28 of Alaska as prescribed by the court.

29 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Exxon Corporation to
30 cease its ongoing efforts to delay and avoid payment of the judgment, and to now pay all
31 claimants owed punitive damages as a result of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

1 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the
2 United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President
3 of the U.S. Senate; Janet Reno, Attorney General of the United States; the Honorable J.
4 Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Trent Lott,
5 Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; Robert Pitofsky, Chairman of the Federal Trade
6 Commission; William J. Baer, Director, Bureau of Competition, Federal Trade Commission;
7 the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, the Honorable
8 Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and Lee R.
9 Raymond, President and Chief Executive Officer of Exxon Corporation.