

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

2000

Source

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Legislative
Resolve No.

36



Requesting Exxon Mobil Corporation to pay claimants for court-ordered damages resulting from the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

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

WHEREAS, on March 24, 1989, at 12:04 a.m., the oil tanker Exxon Valdez grounded on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound resulting in a spill of 11,000,000 gallons of North Slope crude oil along Alaska's shoreline; and

WHEREAS, immediately following the spill, executives of Exxon Corporation promised the residents of the state that they would make Alaska whole again; and

WHEREAS the oil spill killed or affected seabirds, sea otters, harbor seals, bald eagles, killer whales, salmon and herring eggs, and many tidal plants and animals, and has caused long-term damage to the environment of Prince William Sound; and

WHEREAS the oil spill affected many communities; commercial, subsistence, and sport fishermen; tourism operators; subsistence gatherers; large and small businesses; and others in the area; and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 1994, an Alaska jury in the federal district court returned verdicts against Exxon Corporation to help compensate those affected by the spill;

the verdicts provided for payment of damages in the amount of nearly \$5,300,000,000, of which \$5,000,000,000 represents an award of punitive damages; and

WHEREAS, between 1994 and 1996, the federal district court judge denied numerous motions by Exxon Corporation to overturn or adjust the verdicts, and the corporation continues to file motions that delay settlement of the case; and

WHEREAS, between 1996 and today, Exxon Corporation filed two motions for new trials that were denied by the federal court; and

WHEREAS oral arguments were held on May 3, 1999, on Exxon Corporation's appeal of the denial for its second motion for a new trial and, pending the outcome of this appeal, the company may file a petition for further review to the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS Exxon Corporation has prospered financially in the 11 years since the oil spill and has merged with Mobil Corporation to create the largest corporation in the world; and

WHEREAS, 11 years after the oil spill and five years after the damage judgment, 40,000 claimants are still waiting for payment of compensatory and punitive damages; 500 claimants have died since 1989; and

WHEREAS the majority of the claimants who are owed compensatory and punitive damages are working men and women with families, homes, mortgages, and financial obligations; and

WHEREAS the petroleum industry plays a vital role in providing revenue, employment, and economic stability for the state; and

WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature has encouraged development of the petroleum industry through incentives and partnerships; and

WHEREAS, in order to foster partnerships between Exxon Mobil Corporation and the people of Alaska, Exxon Mobil Corporation must make good on its promise to make Alaska whole again, and pay its debt to the people of Alaska as prescribed by the court.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Exxon Mobil Corporation to immediately pay the compensatory damages awarded in the court-ordered judgment, and to pay the punitive damages, if affirmed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, without further delay or appeal.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the

United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Janet Reno, Attorney General of the United States; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; Robert Pitofsky, Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission; Richard G. Parker, Director, Bureau of Competition, Federal Trade Commission; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and Lee R. Raymond, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and President of Exxon Mobil Corporation.