

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVES THERRIAULT, Davies, Whitaker, Mulder, Harris**

**Introduced: 2/8/99**

**Referred: Health, Education and Social Services, Finance**

**A RESOLUTION**

**1 Relating to using oil spill settlement funds to create an endowment for the  
2 sciences at the University of Alaska.**

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

**4 WHEREAS** the biological resources of the northern Gulf of Alaska were affected by  
**5 the Exxon Valdez oil spill; and**

**6 WHEREAS** the Exxon Valdez oil spill disrupted the economic and social lives of  
**7 many of the local residents in the Prince William Sound area; and**

**8 WHEREAS** a spill of the magnitude of the Exxon Valdez oil spill not only affects the  
**9 wildlife and fish habitat, but also has economic, social, and psychological effects in rural  
10 Alaska where traditional life styles of local populations, including the Native population, may  
11 be severely disrupted; and**

**12 WHEREAS** baseline scientific data is inadequate to assess positively the damage of  
**13 the Exxon Valdez oil spill, to manage major spills, and to realistically restore the environment;  
14 and**

**15 WHEREAS** Alaska has more coastline than any other state in the union, making it  
**16 imperative that Alaska take the lead in using the accumulation of scientific knowledge and**

1 promoting the advancement of scientific technology now as well as in the future; and

2       **WHEREAS**, with scientific advancements in the decades ahead, eventual enhancement  
3 of many biological resources will be possible; and

4       **WHEREAS** the mission of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council is to efficiently  
5 restore the environment injured by the spill to a healthy, productive ecosystem, while taking  
6 into account the importance of quality of life and the need for viable opportunities to establish  
7 and sustain a reasonable standard of living; and

8       **WHEREAS**, because the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council is in charge of  
9 restoring, rehabilitating, replacing, enhancing, or acquiring equivalent resources and services  
10 in the oil spill region, the accumulation of scientific knowledge to manage a future oil spill  
11 must be a high priority in the council's program; and

12       **WHEREAS**, although significant research projects have been supported by the council,  
13 many important areas of inquiry remain that can be effectively addressed only over an  
14 extended period of time; additionally, there are significant research projects relating to spill  
15 technology, restoration methods, and ecosystem preservation that need to be pursued and  
16 extended for maximum public benefit; and

17       **WHEREAS** the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council restoration plan includes  
18 adequate provisions for establishing a sound future-oriented program of research and top-level  
19 study that would accumulate and spread knowledge of the North to the world; and

20       **WHEREAS** the University of Alaska has taken a leadership role in many of these  
21 areas of study and is strongly committed to working in rural Alaska as well as to attracting  
22 students from rural Alaska; and

23       **WHEREAS** the University of Alaska is a statewide system with locations in Valdez,  
24 Cordova, Petersburg, Homer, Seward, Kodiak, Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel,  
25 Dillingham, and many other locations in rural Alaska; and

26       **WHEREAS** the University of Alaska is currently conducting research in fisheries and  
27 oceanography; and

28       **WHEREAS** a general endowment will permit the university to fund specific projects  
29 and studies that may only require a limited time to answer and to be flexible to fund new  
30 studies as new questions or problems arise; and

31       **WHEREAS** endowed academic chairs and research centers would provide the

1 continuing quality scientific investigation, scientific publications, and excellence in training  
2 that will be needed by the agencies and the industry responsible for resource management and  
3 development into perpetuity; and

4 **WHEREAS** the establishment of selected endowed chairs in relevant instructional,  
5 research or public service programs would further ensure that the lessons learned from the  
6 Exxon Valdez tragedy will continue to be explored and discussed in classrooms, laboratories,  
7 public seminars, and community outreach programs; and

8 **WHEREAS** a high caliber of endowed professors attract the highest quality graduate  
9 students and most often have a competitive edge in securing grants and contracts; and

10 **WHEREAS** concentrating a major center for the advancement of sciences at the  
11 University of Alaska is in the best interests of all Alaskans since agency and industry research  
12 is normally directed to the public; and

13 **WHEREAS** endowed university research is normally broad in scope, produces peer-  
14 reviewed publications, has long-term continuity, and produces an outflow of trained  
15 professionals; and

16 **WHEREAS** the University of Alaska already has an appropriate foundation for  
17 managing endowed chairs, thus eliminating the cost of a new bureaucracy, and has the  
18 resources to enhance an endowment in time with additional funds acquired from other  
19 agencies and from industry; and

20 **WHEREAS** an endowment enables the University of Alaska to create a self  
21 perpetuating fund to fulfill the long-term goals of the spill settlement funds; and

22 **WHEREAS** the combination of a general endowment and endowed chairs allows the  
23 University of Alaska both flexibility and long-term funding with an irrevocable commitment  
24 to continue the study of all of the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill and any future spills  
25 that may happen in Alaska waters or any other waters on this earth; and

26 **WHEREAS** the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council expends money obtained from  
27 settlement of oil spill litigation;

28 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill  
29 Trustee Council to establish a \$100,000,000 endowment to the University of Alaska for the  
30 purpose of endowing a substantial number of chairs in the sciences that will fulfill the intent  
31 of the settlement.

1           **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Tony Knowles, Governor  
2 of Alaska; the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council; Mark Hamilton, President of the  
3 University of Alaska; Michael J. Burns, President of the Board of Regents of the University  
4 of Alaska; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.  
5 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska  
6 delegation in Congress.