

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS GARY STEVENS, Elton, Ellis

Introduced: 2/18/05

Referred: Resources, Judiciary

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to honor the process and judgment of the federal**
2 **courts in the case of the Exxon Valdez disaster and to refrain from enacting legislation**
3 **that would affect the outcome of the courts' resolution of the case.**

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

5 **WHEREAS**, in 1989, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker ran aground on Bligh Reef off the
6 coast of Alaska, discharging more than 11 million gallons of toxic crude oil into Prince
7 William Sound, and becoming what President George H. W. Bush called "the worst marine
8 environmental disaster this nation has ever experienced"; and

9 **WHEREAS**, in September 1994, a unanimous jury of Alaskans found Exxon
10 Corporation liable for the Exxon Valdez oil spill and awarded damages of \$5.3 billion to
11 those injured by the spill, including punitive damages in the amount of \$5 billion; and

12 **WHEREAS**, nearly 15 years after the disaster, and more than ten years after the
13 original jury verdict, the victims are still awaiting resolution of the litigation; and

14 **WHEREAS** the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is currently reviewing the latest
15 appeal of the damages order by Exxon Mobil Corporation and is expected to issue its decision

1 sometime later this year; and

2 **WHEREAS**, during consideration by the United States Congress of the Oil Pollution
3 Act of 1990, Exxon Mobil Corporation sought an amendment that would have substantially
4 reduced the punitive damages that it would have paid for the Exxon Valdez oil spill;

5 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges that the
6 United States Congress respect the judicial process and refrain from enacting any legislation
7 that would alter the punitive damages awarded to more than 32,000 plaintiffs as a result of the
8 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill as finally determined by the federal courts.

9 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
10 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States
11 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Bill Frist, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate;
12 the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable
13 Frank H. Murkowski, Governor of Alaska; and the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable
14 Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
15 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.