

# NEWS RELEASE



# NEWS RELEASE

*For immediate release: June 1, 2006*

## **Contacts:**

Justin Massey – (907) 276-4244 x114

Jennifer Gibbins – (907) 424-5890

Ross Mullins – (907) 424-3664 or (907) 424-4790

Pat Lavin – (907) 229-9830

## **Alaskans React to Decision on *Exxon Valdez* Reopener**

Members  
Alaska Center for  
the Environment  
Cascadia Wildlands  
Project  
Cook Inletkeeper  
Eyak Preservation  
Council  
National Wildlife  
Federation  
Prince William  
Sound Keeper  
Riki Ott  
Sierra Club  
Stacy Studebaker

Contributors  
Ken Adams  
Vince Patrick  
Ross Mullins

Counsel  
Trustees for Alaska

Coordinator  
Stacey Marz  
(907) 360-2919

ANCHORAGE, AK – Alaskans reacted today to the decision by the State of Alaska and the United States to reopen the 1991 natural resource damages settlement for the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill by filing a \$92 million restoration plan with ExxonMobil Corporation under the “Reopener for Unknown Injury” section of the 1991 settlement.

“Reopening the settlement recognizes the long-term impacts of the worst oil spill in American history,” said Cordova fisherman Ross Mullins. “It demonstrates that oil is more toxic and persistent than anyone knew in 1991. With these funds, the governments can continue restoring Alaska’s environment.”

Since 1991, scientists have confirmed the continued exposure of various wildlife species to lingering oil from the *Exxon Valdez*. Studies by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration suggest that 100 to 200 tons of oil lingers in the spill zone, and studies coordinated by the joint state-federal *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council indicate that 23 of the 30 resources and services injured by the spill have not recovered.

“We thank the governments for having the foresight to insist on the reopener clause and we stand behind them in demanding that Exxon clean up its lingering oil,” said Mayor Tim Joyce of Cordova.

Through resolutions of the Alaska Legislature, local and tribal governments, and various organizations, Alaskans voiced overwhelming support for reopening the 1991 settlement to restore injured fish, marine mammals, seabirds, invertebrates, and other resources. The governments’ plan seeks to restore only some of these natural resources, leading advocates of a more comprehensive plan to note that more needs to be done. “Understanding and addressing the long-term impact of lingering oil is an important step in the restoration process,” said Pat Lavin, of the National Wildlife Federation and a member of the Public Advisory Committee to the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council, “but this plan leaves much to be done. We look forward to working with the governments to restore Pacific herring and the other resources injured by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill that are not included in this plan.”

The governments’ restoration plan is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/open.html>.

###