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### EXXON TAKES VALDEZ PAYMENT DISPUTE TO SUPREME COURT



Exxon is looking to skirt payments of \$2.5 billion dollars to almost 33,000 Cordova plaintiffs. File photo, Alaska Superstation ABC@.

Locals in Valdez know of it as the Oil Spill. Outsiders know of it as the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. No one knows this tragedy best than those who lived through it. The local fishermen who endured ruined livelihoods, broken marriages, and suicides, faced realities that no news story could cover.

Nineteen years later, and talk around Cordova still mostly subsists on the numbing wait for legal retribution. Known as the worst oil spill in US history, 11 million gallons of crude oil spilled into the rich fishing waters of Prince William Sound.

An Anchorage jury awarded victims \$5 billion in punitive damages back in 1994. Courts appeals by Exxon Mobil Corp. has since cut that number in half. Now the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments Wednesday from Exxon on why the company should not have to pay punitive damages at all.

The almost 33,000 plaintiffs are made up of commercial fisherman, Alaska Natives, landowners, businesses and local governments. On Wednesday they will see if the court takes away the \$2.5 billion judgement.

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- Hans Gatt
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- Jeff King
- Lance Mackey
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