



19 years later... Still no "public purpose"

by **Larry Kissell**

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This is a **disgrace**.

WASHINGTON — The Exxon Valdez oil spill, which caused a 3,000-square-mile oil slick and still affects Alaska's fisheries after nearly 19 years, was a "tragedy," Exxon's lawyer told the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

But the company has been punished enough by \$3.4 billion in criminal fines, cleanup costs and compensation payments, the lawyer added, arguing that the \$2.5 billion in punitive damages approved by a federal appeals court served no additional "public purpose."

It's actually ironic that as Exxon lawyers argued their 19 year old case to the Supreme Court yesterday that no "public purpose" is served by punitive damages for the Exxon Valdez oil spill, that Congress happened to pass the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008.

I'm glad Congress is trying to do something for a change about the energy crisis, but it's not enough to send non veto-proof legislation taxing big oil to a White House that is headquarters for big oil. Unfortunately it is in all likelihood headed straight for President Bush's veto.

Larry Kissell's diary :: ::

Here's how bad Washington has gotten friends.

My opponent Robin Hayes voted against his *own* economic self interest yesterday. Finally. Yes, *that* Robin Hayes.

Robin Hayes, a strong supporter of President Bush (86 percent), the Republican Party (97 percent), the Cheney energy policy (Nov 2003), removing the moratorium on offshore drilling (Jun 2006), and drilling in the pristine ANWAR reserve (Aug 2001) - **the** Robin Hayes that holds a significant stake in the oil companies he voted to tax yesterday, making more than mere dividends off the millions in Exxon, Royal Dutch Shell, BP and Chevron stock **he owns**.

That Robin Hayes voted to tax, basically, himself yesterday, confident in the notion President Bush would save him with a veto. Let's get real folks.

Energy independence is not a political football. It's a moral imperative, our very survival depends on.

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