

March 27, 2006

Mr. Jerry Cipriano
CBS Evening News
524 W. 57th Street
New York, NY 10019-2902

Dear Mr. Cipriano:

In response to the program *CBS Evening News* ran on the 17th Anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, I would like to set the record straight.

Your program misrepresented key facts about the condition of Prince William Sound. Hundreds of peer-reviewed studies conducted by researchers from major independent scientific laboratories and academic institutions resoundingly demonstrate the recovery of the Prince William Sound ecosystem and strongly contradict claims that wildlife and aquatic plants continue to suffer as a result of the 1989 spill.

One of the most unfortunate statements in your program was that "no salmon or herring have been caught for 10 years." This is blatantly wrong. In fact, there have been seven all-time record salmon runs. For example, last season the run was so large that millions of fish were left to die and rot in hatchery areas.

Just as in all previous spills seen worldwide, the remaining oil that did not dissipate or evaporate is encapsulated in place. Less than two-tenths of one percent of the 5,000 kilometer shoreline contains some remnant and sequestered oil. If it was leaching into the environment in ecologically meaningful quantities, it would be gone after 17 years. You simply can't have it both ways.

The Valdez oil spill was a tragic accident that ExxonMobil deeply regrets. The company took immediate responsibility for the spill, cleaned it up, and voluntarily compensated those who claimed damages. ExxonMobil was complimented by the Anchorage judge for its response and its voluntary payment of \$300 million to more than 11,000 Alaskans and businesses affected by the spill. In addition, the company spent \$2.2 billion on the cleanup and paid \$1 billion in settlements with the state and federal governments.

With regard to the punitive damages award, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has twice thrown out District Court decisions in this matter, calling the punitive award "excessive." This is a clear indication that there is validity to ExxonMobil's arguments.

The environment in Prince William Sound today is healthy, robust and thriving, a conclusion reached by many scientists who have done extensive studies of the ecosystem.

Sincerely,



c: Rodney Comrie
Jim Murphy
Byron Pitts
Bob Schieffer