

EVOS Plaintiffs Win Interest on Award

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Casey Kelly/KBBI

A three-judge panel of the 9th U-S Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that plaintiffs in the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill litigation should receive 5-point-9 percent interest on their punitive damages dating back to September 1996.

Last year, after the U-S Supreme Court issued its decision to cap punitive damages at 507.5-million dollars. Kodiak attorney Matt Jamin says the high court asked the 9th Circuit to rule on the issue of how far back Exxon should have to pay interest. The court panel heard oral arguments from Exxon and plaintiffs late last year and issued its decision yesterday.

If the ruling stands, the total interest awarded to the thousands of fishermen, processing workers and Alaska Natives who are plaintiffs in the lawsuit, would total about 500-million dollars. Jamin says it's a victory for those who were stung by the Supreme Court's decision to set punitive damages at one-tenth of the original jury award. But, as with seemingly every twist and turn of this now 20-year-old legal battle, Exxon has the opportunity to appeal.

Exxon has two weeks from yesterday's ruling to ask for the 9th Circuit Court to review the case. If the company lets the two weeks go by without doing that, it would then have 90 days to ask the Supreme Court for review.