

Jury Finds Exxon Liable For \$150M In Spill

Oil Company Sued For 2006 Gasoline Leak

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TOWSON, Md. -- A Baltimore County jury Thursday awarded \$150 million to nearly 300 people who sued Exxon Mobil Corp. over wells contaminated by a gasoline leak north of Baltimore.

About 26,000 gallons of gasoline leaked from a gas station in February 2006 in Jacksonville.

Officials estimated that about 675 gallons of fuel leaked for 37 days straight before it was detected.

Baltimore television WBAL reported that the payoffs were broken down into three categories: medical expenses, the devaluation of property values and emotional stress.

Families were awarded amounts from \$300,000 to more than \$1 million based on the value of their homes. Medical expense awards ranged from \$4,000 to \$90,000. Families were awarded, on average, about \$1 million for emotional stress.

The jury didn't find Irving, Texas-based Exxon guilty of fraud, and therefore couldn't impose punitive damages.

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- LaGina Facinoli

LaGina Facinoli, who was one of the plaintiffs, said she was upset that the jury found the oil company not guilty of fraud, according to [WBAL 1090 AM](#).

"It spilled for 37 days. I don't care if it was an hour, a day, it spilled for 37 days. That's fraudulent in any way you look at it," she said.

One Jacksonville resident told the radio station that the verdict was "bittersweet." Ron Determan received \$1.6 million for damages but said he is left with a home he cannot sell for at least 5 to 10 years. The 71-year-old resident also said his wife is suffering from cancer.

It took the jury foreman two hours to read the verdict in court, since the names and awards for each individual receiving damages were read. The jury deliberated for 12 days.

In a prepared statement, Exxon said: "As soon as the leak was discovered, we took immediate action and spared no expense. To date, Exxon has spent more than \$38 million for cleanup activities under the Maryland Department of Environment's oversight and direction.

"We are pleased the jury considered the facts in this case and agreed that this was an unfortunate accident, not a fraudulent or intentional act. We believe, however, we should only compensate those who were directly impacted by the accident, and the compensatory damages should not be so high as to essentially be punitive instead of truly compensating for actual harm caused by the spill."

Plaintiffs' attorneys said the verdict was fair and fraud was difficult to prove.

The company said it would review its legal options before deciding how to proceed.

"We are pleased the jury considered the facts in this case and agreed that this was an unfortunate accident, not a fraudulent or intentional act."

- Exxon Statement

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