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IN BRIEF / OIL

Jury Tells Exxon Mobil to Pay \$1.06 Billion

May 23, 2001 | Associated Press

Exxon Mobil Corp. should pay \$1.06 billion because of radioactive contamination on 33 acres of land owned by a former state judge, a Louisiana state jury decided. Exxon Mobil, which will appeal, did not deny there was some radioactive contamination on land leased from former Jefferson Parish District Judge Joseph Grefer, who lived near the site. In dispute was the amount of radium 226 and radium 228, how much a cleanup would cost and when Exxon Mobil first knew of a possible problem.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs told jurors that Exxon Mobil knew about the potential for contamination since the 1950s but said nothing in hopes of avoiding liability for cleanup costs. The jury ruled the company should pay \$56 million for cleanup and \$1 billion as punishment for keeping a lid on the radium problem.