

# There's something wrong with oil industry claims

by Mark Edward Springer  
for the Tundra Times

HOOVER BAY — The stylized picture painted by the oil industry, both directly and through its political organizations is that the future depends on the continuation of extremely lucrative tax "incentives" and that if the "current state of affairs" is changed, they will pack up their derricks and go home to Texas.

Nothing could be more absurd or farther from the truth. The advertising campaign which, by the way, has been the same for years — Arco's little league kids and the mean umpire or the two kids in the boat, the Alaska Oil and Gas Association's claims that "hundreds of jobs" are created much to the "benefit" of Alaskans with "stable" oil taxes — are an insult to Alaskans with both a stake in the future of our state and a concern for our children's future.

Alaska is nothing more to the petroleum industry than proven reserves. Money in the bank. Alaska is a place where the political winds will not shift toward nationalization, a place where they can essentially do as they please for as long as they want and book it.

Alaska to the petroleum industry is a fat cow with no sign of going dry, and there's plenty of it. Prudhoe Bay is just the tip of an iceberg, well known by the oil industry but a well kept secret to the rest of us.

There is no way on God's green (or, in our case now, white) earth that *any* oil company with a presence here

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would leave because they are taxed too much. The Legislature couldn't drive Arco, British Petroleum and the rest of the gang (and I use that word in every sense of its meaning) out if they tried.

The message, proclaimed loud and clear, though, to the people of our great state is this: "We (the oil industry) are way bigger than all 500,000 of you put together, and our interest(s) are of far more importance to yours, so just stay out of our business." No matter that Prudhoe Bay is owned by the people of Alaska.

The current debate over the Economic Limit Factor is a clear indication of who calls the shots in Alaska. Senators talk about cutting the budget, but they don't have the courage to risk their egomaniacal careers on it. They don't even seem to have the courtesy to try and negotiate with the House.

And where does that leave the people of Alaska? Simply wondering what is going on.