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The Kennedy Center makes our culture accessible as it never was before. Last year more than 2 million people attended performances at the center. Another 20 million saw its touring and broadcast productions. And many of these people who could not otherwise afford the price of admission took advantage of free and low-cost performances.

The Kennedy Center is truly a place for all Americans. It is promise and proof of our shared values. It offers a forum to an amazing variety of God-given talents. The best of art endures, enriches, and enlivens the human condition far beyond the horizon of any of our tomorrows. Our art is the best record of who we are, what we have been, and what we hope to become.

President Kennedy said it best in words inscribed in the marble walls of his memorial: "There is a connection, hard to explain logically, but easy to feel between achievement in public life and progress in the arts. The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. The age of Lorenzo de Medici was also the age of Leonardo da Vinci. The age of Elizabeth was also the age of Shakespeare."

Tonight we pause and pay tribute to the deeper sources of our strength, the expressions of the human spirit that light up not only our stages, but our national life. We celebrate 25 years of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and we look forward in joyful expectation to new generations of performances. The best of the Kennedy Center is yet to come.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

## Statement on Exports of Alaska North Slope Crude Oil

*April 28, 1996*

Today I am taking action that will allow, for the first time, exports of Alaska North Slope (ANS) crude oil. Permitting this oil to move freely in international commerce will contribute to economic growth, reduce dependence on imported oil, and create new jobs for American workers. It will not adversely affect oil supplies or gasoline prices on the West Coast, in Hawaii, or in the rest of the Nation.

I am also announcing additional measures to address safety concerns relating to oil tankers and other commercial vessels in Puget Sound-area waters in Washington State.

I want to express my appreciation to Congress, led by the Alaska congressional delegation, for its bipartisan support of the legislation that has made exports possible. In addition, I want to express my appreciation to Alaska Governor Tony Knowles. It has been a pleasure to work with him to make ANS exports a reality.

After careful consideration, I have determined that ending the 23-year ban against exporting ANS oil is in the national interest, subject to four important conditions:

1. Tankers exporting ANS crude oil must remain outside of the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone. This will ensure that tankers in the ANS export trade remain far from the U.S. coastline and the environmentally sensitive areas along the Aleutian Islands.
2. ANS export tankers must be equipped with a satellite communications system to permit the Coast Guard to monitor the tankers' positions.
3. ANS export tankers must be inspected annually, in accordance with U.S. Coast Guard policies and procedures. This condition will ensure that the tankers are kept in safe working order.
4. ANS export tankers will be required to exchange their ballast water in deep ocean water prior to entering Alaska's Prince William Sound. Ship logs will record ballast exchanges and will be checked periodically by the Coast Guard. This condition will help prevent the introduction into Alaskan fisheries of nonindigenous, aquatic nuisance species.

These requirements, which will be applied to ANS oil exports as export license conditions, will protect Alaska's unique environment and abundant natural resources. A fifth requirement—that exports be carried in U.S.-flag tankers, crewed by U.S. merchant seamen—is already in place under PL 104–58, the oil export legislation I supported and signed into law last November. That law is

also the source of the authority under which I am imposing the four additional export conditions.

By removing the ban that has prevented ANS oil from moving freely in international markets for more than two decades, we will be stimulating increased domestic oil production in Alaska and California, creating new jobs in the oil industry, and preserving jobs for America's merchant seamen.

Over the last several months, my administration has conducted an extensive interagency review of the environmental, economic, and energy aspects of lifting the ban. Led by the National Economic Council and the Council on Environmental Quality, the interagency review team confirmed the Department of Energy's 1994 findings that lifting the export ban would provide important benefits to the economy. Permitting exports will generate up to 25,000 more jobs, particularly for American workers in California and Alaska, but also in States that produce oil industry supplies and equipment. Additional oil production of about 100,000 barrels per day is expected, according to DOE projections, and Alaska, California, and the Federal Government will also benefit from up to $2 billion in additional Federal, State, and local royalty and tax payments.

The review group identified an additional benefit of exports. It determined that overall tanker movements along the West Coast will decline. Because of the ban, the ANS oil that exceeds the West Coast's needs currently must be shipped down the West Coast anyway. Without the ban, that "surplus" oil—which has been suppressing Alaska and California producer prices below U.S. market levels—can now be exported.

While the review group found no likelihood of adverse impacts from ANS exports on Washington State's consumers, refiners, or environment, concern is clearly rising in that State about the increasing volume of vessel traffic projected to occur as a result of *other* factors. For example, the growing international trade between Washington State and Pacific Rim nations, while clearly a boon to the State's economy, is prompting debate over the adequacy of current vessel safety procedures and resources.

I share those concerns. Accordingly, I am requesting the Coast Guard to prepare, by no later than 120 days from today, a status report on its plan for a private-sector vessel assistance system. I am also asking the Coast Guard to accelerate completion of the plan, which will be submitted to Congress, and to offer its assistance to any serious private-sector efforts to improve vessel safety. The plan is required under a provision of the ANS export law authored by Senator Patty Murray, who has been at the forefront of efforts to safeguard her State's waterways. To further support those efforts, I am asking the Secretary of Transportation to determine, by the end of this year, the need for additional, cost-effective measures to protect the marine environment, and to prevent shipping accidents, in Washington State.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that in permitting ANS oil to be exported, I am in no way diminishing my authority under various laws to impose new export restrictions if necessary to respond to a national emergency, or to deal with severe oil supply shortages.

## Memorandum on Exports of Alaskan North Slope Crude Oil

*April 28, 1996*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Commerce, The Secretary of Energy*

*Subject:* Exports of Alaskan North Slope (ANS) Crude Oil

Pursuant to section 28(s) of the Mineral Leasing Act, as amended, 30 U.S.C. 185, I hereby determine that exports of crude oil transported over right-of-way granted pursuant to section 203 of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act are in the national interest. In making this determination, I have taken into account the conclusions of an interagency working group, which found that such oil exports:

—will not diminish the total quantity or quality of petroleum available to the United States; and

—are not likely to cause sustained material oil supply shortages or sustained oil price increases significantly above world market levels that would cause sustained material adverse employment effects in