

agenda 4
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File 702.7

March 21, 1978

Mr. John C. Bryson, Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Room 2115 Federal Building
North & New Streets
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear John,

We have just developed an RFP designed to study the effects of hydraulic clam harvesting on surf clams and on benthic communities. The implications of that proposed study and of the ones proposed in your letter of March 14th, I believe can be coordinated very nicely.

After checking with the National Marine Fisheries Service who will coordinate the joint industry/government clam research project in the Bering Sea this summer, I believe your suggestions are well taken and would suggest a schedule as follows. The research team will not have time between now and the start of the research season to experiment with clam dredge design modifications. They do, however, propose to provide indepth information on the impact of their particular dredge design on the benthic communities. With that information and with the information Don is gathering from the Atlantic Coast, it seems prudent to compare notes in late summer or early fall, plan for the research expenditure and set about to cooperatively study clam dredge design and impact.

We see a need, in managing the clam fishery, to regulate the types of dredges used so as to minimize impacts to the benthic environment. The RFP mentioned in the first paragraph will hopefully go a long way towards giving us that information. We should however, sit down and discuss our proposed joint research project at the conclusion of this summer's test clam fishery and hopefully arrive at some considerable mechanism for research design, testing and funding.

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I am enclosing with this letter, a copy of last year's Cooperative Industry-Federal-State of Alaska Study of the Initial Assessments of the Distribution, Abundance and Quality of Subtidal Clams in the Southeastern Bering Sea. I am also including a draft copy of our RFP. Mark Hutton is working closely with the clam research program and will communicate directly with Don regarding the details of our proposed joint effort with your Council.

Sincerely,

Jim H. Branson
Executive Director

Enclosures

- 1 - Hughes, Steven E., R.W. Nelson and R. Nelson, 1977. Initial Assessments of the Distribution, Abundance and Quality of Subtidal Clams in the Southeastern Bering Sea
- 2 - RFP 78-4 - A Study to Determine the Effects of Hydraulic Clam Harvesting on the Surf Clam (Spisula polynyma) and on the Benthic Environment.

cc: Bering Sea Clam Management Plan Drafting Team
NPFMC
SSC
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