

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 14, 1980
TO: Council, SSC and AP Members
FROM: Jim H. Branson, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Surf Clam FMP



ACTION REQUIRED

Recommend action, if any, on the surf clam plan.

Background

The surf clam fishery management plan has been in the development process since November, 1978. The initial delay was caused by two issues which required additional analysis (a) the lack of viable PSP sampling program for large lot delivery and (b) the legal implications of a leasing program in the fishery conservation zone and in state waters.

The last meeting of the PDT was held in Seattle in February, 1980, at which time the final draft of the fishery management plan was reviewed. The final revisions to the plan incorporating the comments made at this meeting have not yet been made.

Since last year, the State of Alaska PSP sampling program has been expanded to accommodate large lot sampling. The issues of timeliness of processing of samples and the cost have not yet been resolved and in all likelihood will not be resolved until the economics of exploiting the resource become more favorable.

The implications of leasing harvesting rights in the territorial waters of the State were analyzed by George Utermohle, ADF&G, Juneau. The legal analysis of the implications of an FCZ leasing program was requested from the Juneau NOAA General Counsel Office and a final report is expected in September, 1980. A meeting to discuss these reports is also planned in September, 1980.

There is currently little industry interest in exploiting the clam resource covered by the FMP. Strengthening resources in the Atlantic and the high cost of a Bering Sea fishery, plus the unknown PSP problems there, all combine to dampen industry interest.

Council Action

The possible courses of action opened to the Council are:

- (a) shelve the plan;
- (b) complete the plan, send it out for public comment. If there is no further industry interest, shelve the plan;
- (c) continue development of the plan whether or not there is interest from the industry.

A member of the PDT, Rod Kaiser formerly of Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Kodiak, has expressed interest in spending approximately one month to complete the plan. He is currently attending a public resource management course in Oregon.

MD