

North Pacific Fishery

Management Council

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Agenda Item 22a

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 26, 1977

SUBJECT: Bering Sea Clams and a Joint Industry/Government
Proposed Trawl Survey

Two weeks ago a meeting was held on the East Coast to discuss the potential clam resource and harvest potential of the Bering Sea. Representatives from the following companies and agencies were present:

- New England Fish Company
- Howard Johnson Company
- General Mills Company
- Campbell Soup Company
- Borden Company
- The National Marine Fisheries Service
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- University of Alaska

The purpose of the meeting was to explore the possibility of harvesting clams in the Bering Sea. The primary target clam was identified as the surf clam Spisula polynyma. An exploratory cruise is planned for the summer of 77 and will include experimental sampling in Bristol Bay around the Pribolov Islands and the Aleutian Islands. It was generally concluded that this would be an offshore fishery outside three-miles.

The proposed survey and experimental fishing is expected to cost approximately \$175,000 for the equipment and vessel charter. The Alaska Department of Economic Development will contribute \$40,000 while the companies (Howard Johnson, General Mills, Campbell Soup and Borden Company) will contribute \$135,000. Plans are to charter the R/V SMARAGD. The vessel is expected to be outfitted in June and ready to go on July 1. The cruise is expected to last approximately 45 days. The SMARAGD will operate with five crewmen and eight scientists.

The National Marine Fisheries Service will be in charge of the survey and will conduct unofficial paralytic shellfish poisoning tests. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will have biological observers on board and are the prime program managers for the project. The University of Alaska will assist in the biological work and will also conduct unofficial paralytic shellfish poisoning tests. The Alaska State Department of Public Health will conduct official paralytic shellfish poisoning tests.

It is hoped that the clam fishery in the Bering Sea could yield 40 to 50 million pounds of meats a year.

This resource definitely falls within the authority of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and will require a fishery management plan and an environmental impact statement.