

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 22, 1987

The Finance Committee met this morning, January 22, 1987, with the following in attendance:

John Winther, Chairman	Jim Branson
Fred Gaffney	Ron Miller
John Harville	Clarence Pautzke
Robert McVey	Judy Willoughby
Phil Mundy	
Mark Pederson	
John Peterson	

Jim Branson presented a proposal for a Pilot Domestic Observer Program for \$200,000. This proposal would fund three-person-years in observer time and would be administered by the University of Alaska Sea Grant and Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center utilizing the Center's observer program expertise. John Harville moved and Phil Mundy seconded the Finance Committee approve the proposal. The motion passed with no objection. Fred Gaffney offered assistance from the State of Alaska since they already have an observer program in place.

Two other projects were discussed for funding with programmatic funds. These were the economic data needed for the Gulf of Alaska proposal #6 and for implementing limited entry in the sablefish longline fishery. Should this project be accepted, John Harville volunteered to help with the contract.

Ron Miller then reviewed the results of RFP 86-1, "Preferred Management Alternatives for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea Groundfish Fisheries." He stated the Council received nine proposals. A committee met on Monday to review these proposals and they recommended the contract be awarded to Dittman/Graystar. The questions that will be developed by this firm will be reviewed by staff and Council members John Winther, Oscar Dyson, and Rudy Petersen. John Harville moved and Mark Pederson seconded the Committee's recommendation to accept the Dittman/Graystar proposal and the motion passed with no objection. This survey will go to the entire industry and will be done by letter and telephone survey. *by end of July.*

*Complete
John P.
Callwin with
Harville ?*

SHORT TITLE: Pilot Domestic Observer Program

RELEVANT FMPs: Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish
Gulf of Alaska Groundfish

OBJECTIVES AND NEED:

Objectives: This voluntary pilot program will

1. Provide observer coverage of the emerging DAP groundfish fisheries, in order to obtain harvest information on species composition, age composition, and catch per unit effort in directed fisheries of various gear types.
2. Obtain bycatch information, particularly on catches of other fully-utilized species.

Need: Groundfish fisheries off of Alaska are experiencing a rapid transition from predominantly foreign to a wholly domestic industry. Moreover, DAP fishermen are targeting some new and different fisheries and are fishing in areas not previously open to foreign exploitation. Important data and information on directed harvests and associated bycatch have heretofore been obtained from a foreign observer program funded from user fees paid by participating foreign nations; however, the foreign observer program will no longer provide sufficient information required for efficient management of the fisheries. Observer coverage can be required on DAP vessels, but no mechanism for instituting or funding such a program has yet been established. In order not to lose the valuable input of observer data, some program for funding and conducting a domestic observer program must be established. Recognition of such a need has been demonstrated by current drafting of a Domestic Observer Policy by NOAA, formation of a Domestic Observer Committee by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and recent legislation for an observer program by the State of Alaska. The fishing industry has noted that the lack of such information most efficiently and reliably provided by onboard observers may result in overly conservative management which may, then, fail to optimize the social and economic benefits of the fisheries.

Unfortunately, implementation of a federal domestic observer program will take some time, if one is developed at all. Also, although the State of Alaska has the authority to implement such a program, they are currently limited to a special appropriation for only FY 87. Private industry is making an attempt to develop a mechanism for funding an observer program, through the formation of a non-profit fishery research foundation, but again implementation will take some time. A preliminary pilot program would fill a time gap in observer coverage as well as provide important information on DAP fisheries.

The pilot program will be modeled after the NMFS supplemental foreign observer program. The Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center will assist with the administration and management of the program. The Center will also help collate and analyze the data.

Funds being requested for this program will be used to pay observers salaries and costs incurred with the recruitment and placement of observers.

Proposed Budget \$200,000