



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Planning &
Development
Department No.: 053
For Agenda Of: November 6, 2007
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department John Baker, 568-2085
Director(s)
Contact Info: Douglas K. Anthony, 568-2046

SUBJECT: Fisheries Enhancement Fund – Safety Equipment Reimbursement Program

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: No

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: No

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: Select_Concurrence

Recommended Actions:

- A. Approve \$15,000 from the Fisheries Enhancement Fund (FEF) to reimburse those commercial fishers who demonstrate that they have purchased specified safety equipment for their fishing vessels.
- B. Direct staff to continue to fund the Safety Equipment Reimbursement Program as long as the FEF balance remains below \$75,000.
- C. Direct staff to solicit eligible fishers for reimbursements as described below.

Summary Text:

The Safety Equipment Program reimburses commercial fishers for purchasing specific safety items: new Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), EPIRB batteries, a new life raft, or repacking an existing life raft, inflatable buoyant apparatus, immersion suits, and pack of flares. This program aids commercial fishers affected by oil development, improving their overall safety, particularly the safety of those who must travel further to fish due to oil development.

Staff would implement this program as it did in the past (see Background below), by: dispersing reimbursements on a first-come, first-serve basis; verifying via tax returns that more than 50% of their income comes from commercial fishing; and receiving a receipt of the item(s) purchased. Staff will reimburse purchases from January 1, 2007 forward. A boat owner/lessee can receive up to \$500.

The Technical Review Panel, a three-member panel representing the local commercial fishing industry, the offshore petroleum industry, and Planning & Development, recommends the Board of Supervisors approve this program.

Background:

Santa Barbara County established the Fisheries Enhancement Fund (FEF) in the mid-1980s as a permit condition on major offshore oil and gas projects. FEF helps to mitigate impacts to the local commercial fishing industry caused by offshore oil development.

In 1997 and in 1999, staff sent out surveys to approximately 570 fishers, requesting fishers to rank a list of projects that enhance local fisheries and local commercial fishing. Reimbursing fishers for purchasing safety equipment ranked overwhelmingly as the first choice by fishers who responded to both surveys. In response, the County has implemented this program in the past, using \$75,000 from FEF to assist over 150 fishers.

In 2000, the Planning Commission approved the current FEF Mitigation Plan, which states that as long as the FEF balance remains below \$75,000, the fund should be applied to the Safety Equipment and Seafood Safety programs. Currently, the FEF budget has approximately \$24,000, and the County is collecting approximately \$7,500 annually from two offshore oil and gas projects, Point Arguello and Point Pedernales projects.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

No facilities impacts are anticipated, nor does this project impact the General Fund. The Fisheries Enhancement Fund is funded by major oil and gas projects to mitigate impacts to the commercial fishing industry. FEF is included in the Energy Division Cost Center on page D-298 in the Planning & Development Department's section of the County's FY07/08 Budget (see "Source of Funds Summary – Offshore Oil and Gas Mitigation" and "Use of Prior Fund Balances" for revenue, and "Use of Funds Summary – Mitigation Programs.") The reimbursement program and staff costs to implement the program would be expended from Fund #0061, Department #053, Program #5090.

Special Instructions:

Planning & Development, Energy Division, will administer the program.

Authored by:

Kathy McNeal Pfeifer