

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



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

Agenda Number:

Prepared on: March 4, 2004
Department Name: Planning & Development
Department No.: 053
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TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Valentin Alexeeff, Director
Planning & Development

STAFF

CONTACT: Kathy McNeal Pfeifer, 568-2507

SUBJECT: Fisheries Enhancement Fund's Reimbursement Programs

Recommendation(s):

- A. Allocate \$10,000 from the Fisheries Enhancement Fund (FEF) to the Seafood Safety Equipment Reimbursement Program, which reimburses commercial fishers who demonstrate that they have purchased equipment that preserves their catch in the freshest state.
- B. Allocate \$10,000 from FEF to the Safety Equipment Reimbursement Program, which reimburses commercial fishers who demonstrate that they have purchased specified safety equipment for their fishing vessels.
- C. Direct staff to solicit eligible fishers for reimbursements as described below.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendations align with Goal No. 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

Fisheries Enhancement Fund. 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, particularly preclusion from certain traditional fishing grounds, caused by offshore oil development. The permit conditions require subject offshore oil and gas projects to contribute to the fund; the County then funds projects that enhance local fisheries and local commercial fishing. The four offshore oil and gas projects that have contributed to FEF include Santa Ynez Unit Project, Point Arguello Project, Gaviota Terminal, and Point Pedernales Project.

Reimbursement Programs. The Seafood Safety Program reimburses fishers for purchasing and installing new equipment, or retrofitting current equipment on their boats to preserve their catch in its freshest, most wholesome state. The Safety Equipment Program reimburses 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. Fishers who responded to two surveys in the past, ranked these programs as high priorities. In response, the County has implemented the programs three times: in 1996, 2001, and 2003. There is approximately \$2,400 left over in the Seafood Safety program and \$5,400 in the Safety Equipment program from last year. Staff would refresh each program's pot with an additional \$10,000 and continue to implement both programs as it did in the past.

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 these programs and directs the Energy Division to commence as described above. These programs aid commercial fishers affected by oil development, enhancing preservation of harvests that are caught further from port. Having to travel further from port has been identified as an impact due to offshore oil and gas development.

Mandates and Service Levels:

FEF provides indirect mitigation to the local commercial fishing industry from offshore oil and gas development impacts. There are no changes in service level as a result of this reimbursement program.

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. Staff costs to administer this program will be offset by interest accrued to the Fisheries Enhancement Fund. The \$20,000 for the reimbursement programs would be expended from Fund #0061, Department #053, Program #5090. The FEF program is part of the mitigation program within the Energy Division Cost Center on page D-298 in the Planning & Development Department's section of the County's Budget F03/04.

Special Instructions:

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

Concurrence: None.