

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: June 19, 2003
Department Name: Planning & Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: July 1, 2003
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: N/A
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:
Document File Name: g:\group\energy\wp\policy\fish\00
mitplan\seafoodsafety03.bos

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Valentin Alexeeff, Director
Planning & Development

STAFF

CONTACT: Kathy McNeal Pfeifer, 568-2507

SUBJECT: Fisheries Enhancement Fund's Seafood Safety Equipment Reimbursement Program

Recommendation(s):

- A. Allocate \$15,000 from the Fisheries Enhancement Fund (FEF) to the Seafood Safety Equipment Reimbursement Program. This program reimburses those commercial fishers who demonstrate that they have purchased equipment that preserves their catch in the freshest state.
- B. 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 for Seafood Safety Equipment. Fishers who responded to surveys in both 1997 and 1999 ranked reimbursing for purchasing seafood safety equipment as a high priority. In response, the County has implemented this program twice in the past: approximately \$10,000 in 1996 and \$25,000 in 2001. The 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.

Staff would implement this program as it did in the past, 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 April 1, 2003 forward. The only difference between this year's program and the past program is that a boat owner/lessee can receive up to \$500 reimbursement instead of \$1,000 as in the past. The smaller amount of reimbursement allows for more fishers to participate.

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 and directs the Energy Division to commence as described above. This program aids 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 \$15,000 for the reimbursement program 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 FY 2003-04 Budget.

Special Instructions:

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

Concurrence: None.