

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
FINDING ON USE OF REVENUE FROM TEST FISHERIES TO FUND NEW HERRING
FISHERIES
#2003—222—FB

BACKGROUND: During its January 2003 meeting in Sitka on Southeast/Yakutat finfish regulatory proposals, the Board of Fisheries adopted several proposals that established new commercial herring fishing opportunities. In adopting these new fisheries, the board recognized that managing new fisheries placed new responsibilities on the Department of Fish and Game that requires additional funding and staff effort.

The board expected that no additional state general funds will be appropriated by the state legislature to pay the costs of managing these new fisheries. In light of this probability, the board expected the department to utilize its test fish authority to generate sufficient funds to cover the costs for managing these new fisheries. The board considers sound management a prerequisite to opening new fisheries and supports generating revenue from the harvestable surplus, consistent with the Division of Commercial Fisheries' test fish policy, to pay the costs of fisheries management.

The board understands this will reduce the amount of herring available for the commercial fishery. Representatives of the commercial herring fishing industry in attendance at the Sitka meeting unanimously supported the use of test fish revenues to pay for this new fishery.

TEST FISH POLICY: The Division of Commercial Fisheries Test Fish Policy states that "if it is necessary to harvest and sell fish specifically for the purpose of generating revenue necessary to pay for all, or part of, the projects costs, the director of commercial fisheries will review the project to determine if it 1) is important to the sustained yield management of the resource, 2) has substantial public support, and 3) there is no other practical means of funding the project."

The need for and objectives of the project must be explained to the public and their support measured using existing structures such as local fish and game advisory committees and industry organizations through public meetings, surveys, or other similar means. Results of the public meetings and surveys will be presented to the director who will approve or disapprove the program.

The department will operate the projects and manage the revenue generated in the most efficient manner possible. The department will also attempt to receive the highest possible value for the fish or shellfish sold. The policy also stipulates that if there is substantial industry opposition to a test fish fund expenditure, the department will bring the issue before the Board of Fisheries for discussion.

FINDING: The Board of Fisheries finds that the use of test fish revenues to develop the new commercial herring fisheries authorized in January of 2003 is consistent with the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries Test Fish Policy and is necessary for sound management of these new fisheries.

Adopted: February 28, 2003
Ketchikan, AK


Ed Dersham, Chair

Vote: 6 - 0 - 1
(Jensen absent)