



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Press Release

For Immediate Release

October 29, 2001

Contact: Paul Dalzell, 522-6042

Federal Fishery Council Votes to Establish Criteria for Western Pacific Community Demonstration Projects, Elects New Council Chair

HONOLULU (October 29, 2001) Members of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council met last week to discuss management of fisheries in the federal waters (generally, 3 to 200 miles from shore) surrounding Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and U.S. Pacific island possessions. Among the key recommendations by the Council members are the following:

- The Council approved changes to the criteria for the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program, a program aimed to promote involvement in fisheries and provide economic assistance to community residents descended from the aboriginal people. The changes include approving funding for capital construction; prohibiting Council members, Council staff, and members of the Community Demonstration Project Program Advisory Panel from applying for and receiving funding under this program, and that members of other Council Advisory Panels with no direct influence in the selection of project proposals be allowed to participate in, apply for and receive funding from this program; strive to distribute available funds equally among the four island areas; and allow multi-year projects to be funded.
- Under Executive Order 13112 issued February 1999, federal agencies are directed to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control. In general, alien species can be introduced to island ecosystems by non-fishing and fishing vessels in the Pacific. Therefore, the Council members recommended conducting an invasive species risk assessment by characterizing the shipping industry (fishing, cargo, military, cruise ship) for each island area, and including a component in its education program to educate fishermen on invasive species issues and inform fishermen of methods to mitigate the potential for introducing alien species to island ecosystems.
- To allow the development of a limited entry program for the American Samoan longline fishery, Council members recommended NMFS use emergency rulemaking authority under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to establish a moratorium on new entry of US longline vessels larger than 50ft to fish in the US EEZ around American Samoa. To provide for increased participation in the fisheries for the indigenous community in American Samoa, the Council recommended funding for marketing and utilization of the multi-species fishery, and seeking public input in American Samoa for a longline observer program.

- To ensure recreational fishermen receive equal participation in fisheries management, the Council members recommended that a marine recreational data collection system and reporting programs (such as logbooks) be developed for purely recreational fishermen.
- The Council members recommended an assessment of the developing US squid fishery in the North Pacific.
- The Council members recommended contacting other State and Federal agencies to seek economic assistance for fisheries that have been badly affected by the economic downturn as a result of the September 11, 2001 tragedies, especially the tourism-based charter vessel fisheries.
- To balance long-term productivity of bottomfish stocks with opportunities for small scale commercial fishermen, as well as providing for continued availability of high quality fresh bottomfish, the Council recommended amending the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Specifically, they recommended removing the "use it or lose it" requirements (which require annual landings) and provisions prohibiting the charter or lease of permits. The sale of permits will remain prohibited. Only 10 permits would be issued for the Mau Zone (2 of which are set aside for the Community Development Program, which will be used to increase the participation in the fishery for the Native Hawaiian community) and 7 for the Hoomalu Zone. The Mau Zone encompasses federal waters surrounding Nihoa and Necker in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI), and the Hoomalu Zone begins north of Necker Island and ends north of Kure Atoll in the NWHI.
- At the 111th Council meeting, the Council voted to elect Frank Farm from Hawaii as Council Chair, Benny Pangelinan as Vice Chair for CNMI, Aitofele Sunia as Vice Chair for American Samoa, Judith Guthertz as Vice Chair for Guam, and Edwin Ebisui as Vice Chair for Hawaii.

For more information, contact the Council at 522-8220; e-mail nmfs.wprfmc@noaa.gov; or log on to www.wpcouncil.org.