

Pre-harvest Geoduck PSP Testing

FY2004 Request: \$250,000
Reference No: 37713

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Health and Safety
Category: Natural Resources
Location: Southeast Alaska **Contact:** Kristin Ryan
House District: Southeast Areawide (HD 1-5) **Contact Phone:** (907)269-7644
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2003 - 06/30/2005

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Growth in higher priced live sales of geoduck has been hindered by a lack of data on Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP). No historical or trend data is available that would allow harvesters to focus their efforts in areas or times of year when PSP levels are low. Recognizing this shortfall in data, a monitoring program was developed by the state, national PSP experts, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA). This funding will pay monitoring and data collection costs for two years.

Funding:	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	Total
Gen Fund	\$250,000						\$250,000
Total:	\$250,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$250,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
<u>One-Time Startup:</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

This project has had no prior funding.

Project Description/Justification:

In August 2002, a number of national experts along with representatives from the State of Washington, Alaska Science Technology Foundation, the Interstate Shellfish Conference, DEC, SARDFA, and other interested parties held a conference regarding PSP in geoduck and how Alaska could tap into the live market. The State of Washington program was reviewed, including the management of the fishery itself as well as the historical occurrence of PSP and the current monitoring practices. Several differences between Washington and Alaska became evident and it was clear that simply adopting portions of the Washington program would be insufficient for public health protection.

A number of workable changes to Alaska's monitoring program for PSP in geoduck were identified at the stakeholder conference that could increase the ability of the geoduck industry to participate in the live market. The greatest obstacle to implementing the agreed upon changes is the lack of information regarding PSP trends in those areas where geoduck are harvested. This lack of information will prevent the state from fully implementing monitoring changes seen as needed to increase the marketability of live geoduck while at the same time protecting public health.

There is no dispute that an outbreak of PSP related to Alaska shellfish would be extremely detrimental to the entire Alaska shellfish industry. This capital project will allow DEC, ADFG and SARDFA to begin gathering the necessary

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information relative to PSP that is needed to fully expand this fishery as a live fishery. Both the State of Washington and British Columbia, the only other commercial marketers of geoduck, have generated this information for their own fishery. It is used to make monitoring decisions during the fishery, and that will be the use it will be put towards in Alaska.

If the project is not funded, the geoduck industry will continue to be hampered by the lack of information regarding PSP trends. We will be unable to find the window of opportunity, either geographically or seasonally, in which PSP levels are relatively low and harvesting for live sales can be generally assured.