

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
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## Agenda Number:

**Prepared on:** 5/13/99  
**Department Name:** Planning & Development  
**Department No.:** 053  
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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** John Patton, Director  
Planning & Development

**STAFF CONTACT:** Kathy McNeal Pfeifer, 568-2507

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to a Fisheries Enhancement Fund's Safety Equipment Program

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## Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors approve an amendment to the Fisheries Enhancement Fund (FEF) program that reimburses commercial fishermen for purchases of safety equipment.

## Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

## Executive Summary and Discussion:

**Background.** On July 1, 1997, the Board of Supervisors approved the use of \$20,000 from the Fisheries Enhancement Fund (FEF) to reimburse commercial fishers for purchases of safety equipment. Permit conditions on four oil and gas projects require the oil companies to contribute to FEF; the County then funds projects that enhance local fisheries and local commercial fishing.

The Safety Equipment program reimburses commercial fishers up to 25% of the costs to replace Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) batteries, repack their life raft, or purchase a new EPIRB or life raft. This reimbursement program ranked highest amongst 137 fishers that responded to a survey conducted by the County in 1996. Because of the program's popularity, the Planning Commission recommended funding it first amongst thirteen other programs in the 1997-1999 FEF Mitigation Plan.

In approving the program, the Board of Supervisors limited the fisher's reimbursement to 25% of the cost of one of the safety items not to exceed \$400 per boat or company. With these limitations, the Board assumed the \$20,000 allocated for the program could benefit a minimum of 50 fishers.

However, since inception of the program in mid-1997, only 29 commercial fishers received reimbursements. The average reimbursement equates to approximately \$250, with \$12,800 still remaining of the \$20,000. In the past two years, the Energy Division staff has sent two announcements about the reimbursement program to over 550 fishers. Staff can only speculate that fishers view the 25% reimbursement as too little.

**Proposed Amendment.** Staff recommends an amendment to the program to allocate the remaining \$12,800. Instead of limiting the reimbursement to 25% of the cost of one item and a maximum limit of \$400, staff recommends a \$500 reimbursement. This revision can benefit the first 25 fishers that respond to an announcement staff plans on sending to the fishers. Administering the program and eligibility requirements remain the same.

Staff recommends amending this program to make it more appealing since it ranked highest amongst the fishers. This program is important in that it aids commercial fishermen affected by oil development, improving their overall safety, particularly the safety of those who must travel further to fish due to preclusion from closer fishing areas where oil development now occurs.

#### **Mandates and Service Levels:**

Condition of permits require four projects to contribute to FEF. 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 amendment to the reimbursement program.

#### **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

On July 1, 1997, the Board approved \$20,000 for the reimbursement program; \$12,800 of that \$20,000 remains in Fund #0061, Department #053, Program #5090, Project #97RE. The amendment to the program does not impact the County fiscally nor does it adversely impact County facilities. Planning & Development, Energy Division budgeted the program's remaining costs of \$12,800 and associated staff cost for administering the program in the FY 98-99 and proposed FY 99-00 budgets for the Fisheries Enhancement Fund.

#### **Special Instructions:**

None.

#### **Concurrence:**

None.