

Herrmann asks President for Bristol Bay sale delay

Citing the regional, national and even internationally recognized fishery values in Bristol Bay, Rep. Adelheid Herrmann (D-Naknek) has appealed directly to President Reagan in an attempt to secure a delay in proposed offshore oil development in the region.

The State of Alaska has formally requested that the federal government delay the sale for 10 years, but Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel has indicated that he wants to press ahead with the lease sale in January of 1986.

"Bristol Bay is one of the richest fishing grounds not just in Alaska, not just in North America, but **in the world**," Herrmann wrote to the president. The direct wholesale value of the region's salmon fishery alone is approximately \$250 million a year while estimates of the overall economic contribution of the combined salmon, crab, herring, and developing bottomfish industries have been put at nearly a billion dollars a year, the letter stated.

"It is common knowledge that existing oil spill response technologies would be largely worthless in weather conditions typically found in the pro-

posed sale area... even representatives of the oil industry will admit this when pressed with direct questions," she said. In her letter, Herrmann noted that the fishing industry is the largest private employer in the state and that the Bristol Bay fisheries employ about 10,000 people.

In contrast to the world renowned fishery values, Herrmann observed that the amount of oil projected in the region was insignificant. "According to the Department of the Interior's own analysis the sale area represents only about two percent of the Nation's estimated undiscovered offshore oil resources," Herrmann pointed out. "In fact, the amount of oil projected for the area amounts to only about three weeks' worth of oil for the United States."

"I fully recognize the need for oil development in this country," Herrmann said, "but pushing ahead with this sale before the industry has the ability to contain and clean up a spill does not make sense, economically or environmentally, and the amount of oil involved would not have a significant impact on national security."